First Times

First glances…First Words…First steps
Intriguing possibilities of events that have yet to happen, the anticipation of good things to come.

The first time that glances turn into looks that reveal more than a friendly interest
The first time words stray from small talk into intimate conversations
The first steps of going from social hugs to sexual interactions

Intriguing anticipations…

The first time that mutual hunger is made apparent
The first time lips exchange wanting kisses
The first time hands search for special places

Intriguing anticipations…

The first time skins are bared and warm one another
The first time mouths taste and sooth sensitive areas
The first sweat of lovers expressing their passions

Intriguing anticipations…

The first motions of interaction
The first moans of satisfaction
The first explosions of ecstasy

I stand here intrigued and anticipate our… First time

At first the crowd was silent. Because he looked at me the entire time, several other people were looking at me too. Not knowing what the hell else to do I try to play it off and start clapping, “Alright! That was good! Show the brother some love!” I say nervously. As the crowd begins their applause, Steve smiles at me and says silently, “Surprise.” As Steve makes his way back to his seat, the M.C. says, “That young man worked! I mean he worked! Somebody got you wide open. Little man, who inspired all of that?” Steve smile, by now his face is red with embarrassment. He looks up at the M.C. and just shacks his head and begins to laugh. The M.C. continues, “Oh… So, you ain’t g’on tell it… You must be scared he might ***inspire*** someone else!” The whole crowd begins to laugh. It is at this point that I feel myself really falling in love with this man.

Through out the rest of the program Steve seems more relaxed, but I know he must be wondering what’s going through my mind. When the program is over, he walks me to my car. As we make our way to the parking lot several people stop and tell him what a great

job he had done and two of them exchange numbers with him. Because I got there late, I had to park in the far side of the lot. When we finally make it to my car I lean against it and prepare to say goodnight. Smiling I say, "I'm very impressed. I'm at a lose for words." Steve looks at me and says nothing. Once again he has that intense look in his eyes and a smirk on his face. Knowing what is about to happen I say nervously, "Well Steve it's time for me to go now." Still silent he moves in closer. By now most of the other cars are gone.

Now he is standing so close that I can feel the warmth of his breath against my face. As he slowly presses his thick body against mine, I find myself unable to move. Steve's beauty and intensity overwhelms me. He slowly slides his arms inside my open jacket and puts his arms around me and my heart begins to race. Holding me close he begins rubbing the smooth skin of his face against mine. As he leans against me, I can feel that his piece is fully erect. He presses it firmly against me, as he continues to rub his smooth cheek against mine. I can feel him throbbing. With out words he is begging me to make love to him. Whatever doubt or confusion I may have had about his intentions is long gone. As I slide my hands up and over his broad shoulders, I can feel the warmth of his body though his black silk turtleneck. I close my eyes and begin to pull him even closer to me.

His thick firm lips kiss my neck as we stand there for a moment holding and rubbing one another. Feeling his arms around my body and the thickness of his body in my arms, I begin to feel myself lose control. Still caressing my face with his, he slowly moves his hands from my back, around my sides, and up to my chest. He uses his thumbs and forefingers to softly rub and pinch my already erect nipples. Enjoying this slice of ecstasy, I slowly run my hands down his back and begin rubbing his thighs and firm ass. *Damn his body feels good to me!* He pauses for a moment. It's as if he's allowing himself to enjoy the feeling of my hands rubbing his body.

Opening my eyes, I find that he is staring directly into them. His eyes seem to sparkle, as I continue to rub his back, his thighs and all points in between. Still leaning firmly against me, he spreads his thighs on either side of me, which brings his eyes and lip to the same level as mine. He slides both hand up my neck and begins rubbing my bold head with his warm thick hands. Still staring into each other's eyes our lips touch gently at first so gently that it almost tickles. The feeling sends chills through me. *Damn I want this man!*

The hair on his well-groomed face tickles my chin and mouth as we continue searching each other lips and expressing our desires for one-another. I can feel his firm wet tongue trace slowly across the opening of my mouth as it searches for mine. I need to taste him. I want him to taste me. Slowly our tongues probe and circle one another. As we gently taste and suck each other's tongues, I notice that his hand has found its way to my full erection. It's rock hard and seems more sensitive than ever. His warm hand rubs and caresses it slowly as if it is precious to him. The feeling it gives me makes one of my legs start to tremble. We each stop and look at one another. Both of use fully aroused, Forehead to forehead and nose to nose we stand there in silence. Steve takes a deep breath and holds me very tight. We stand embraced fore a moment and then he steps

back. He sighs, kisses my forehead, turns and begins walking toward his car. He turns around once more smiles waves goodnight. I am left speechless as I watch him get in his car and drive off. With out a word he is gone.

Feeling a mixture of guilt and desire, I open my car door, sit inside and stare off into space. When it was just a sex thing it was much easier to control my feelings. But now, seeing this side of Steve is starting to take my feelings to a different level. I have never been toughed like that before. Thinking about how good his body feels to mine was starting to make me crazy. No one has ever kissed me like that before. I need to go home and get myself together.

-The Night Max Left Atlanta-

By Marco Sanders 8/27/97

You know, the things that happened the night I left Atlanta have changed me forever. I don't think I'll ever love anyone like I loved that man. It was like I was crazy — possessed by demons or some kinda shit. Oh, and stupid — Child, if you only knew the half of it. Sometimes when you are in love you can go of into a dream world to try and hid from reality. Girl, that night I woke up. When you wake from the dream it never seems quite as sweet. Hell, Child, I woke up to a nightmare.

It was the day before my birthday and in spite of how fucked-up our relationship was, I looked forward to spending that time with Johnny. I had just gotten my hair braided, my nails manicured and I was feeling quite cute. That night I took a long hot bath, you know, burned some incense, and listened to a little jazz. You know, just being good to myself. We hadn't been fighting for two or three weeks and I was in a real good mood. Things weren't really any better, but I tried to make the best of it. I was still "dreaming", *okay*. Because, you know, other than selling crack, he never could keep a job. And when he started smoking up his inventory — you know Miss Max started really seeing the light, but, "Oh- no— I could *save* him." Well anyway, I was feeling quite lovely after my bath, cause, you know, Miss Calgon Bath Oil Beads had truly taken me away. I was in the bathroom, you know, in the mirror styling my braids and humming along with music on the radio and in he walks.

It was just one more night of him coming home drunk and high on whatever. Johnny came in all funky and smelling like weed and malt liquor and shit. He wanted to kiss all over me and started pulling on my dick and shit, you know, being all nasty and rough, in all the *wrong* ways. I just was not having it … Not tonight. I pushed him away and he grabbed me by my braids with both hands and said, "Oh, you too pretty tonight? I can't touch you?" Usually when he came in like that, to keep from having to fight or go through all kinds of drama, I either gave in to him or gave him some more liquor, so that he would pass out and leave me the hell alone. Other times he would come in so geeked-up on acid and shit that he would force his self on me, whether I wanted him to fuck me or not. He thought that would be the case that night, but it was a *new* day.

We argued and fought for a while and he seemed even more evil than usual. Tired of going through this shit, I suddenly felt a since of peace fall over me. I had made up my mind. I could not live like that anymore. He was too strong to fight off. Child, you remember how big and tall Johnny was. I just said, "Here it is. Take it." He looked at me, almost like he had sobered up a little. I got even more pissed, "What's wrong mutha-fucka you can't hear? Hell, you done beat my ass for it — you scared to get up in it?" And what did I say that for? Child, he snatched me up by my braids, through me down and kicked my ass all around the bathroom and into the bedroom. It was awful. Johnny said, "Black bitch! I'ma show yo ass!" He kicked me in my stomach so hard, that I almost black out. I remember him forcing his dick in me so hard it felt as though my ass had just split open. How could some one who used to love me so much beat me and fuck

me like I was less than trash. And further more, what kind of sick bitch was I to stay with him. It seemed to go on and on for hours. Child, I hollered and screamed when he fucked me. When I quite hollering he beat me and fucked me some more. I don't remember him stopping. When I came to my scenes he was laying next to me on the bed passed out cold.

I remember staring at him for hours that night, watching him and thinking about how peaceful and child-like he was when he was sleeping. I thought back on how gorgeous this man was and how good things could have been. How great things used to be. How the touch of his huge hands soothed me and the sound of his deep, husky voice aroused all of my scenes. We would drink and laugh and have wild sex. Oh could that man work my body. He was so gentle and patient with me, but even then I could barely take him all — *you know*. Yeah, he was a roughneck hood, but there was a very sweet side to him that few people got to see, A side that began to hide from me as well. Johnny's sweet and gentle side turned cold and uncaring. What used to feel so good began felling cold, cheap, and — painful. I thought that this dark side of his personality was just phase or a mood or something. Child, it tuned out to be that boy's true colors shining through.

Needless to say, he was a very troubled man. The world was not a kind place for him. Perhaps he found an escape when he slipped into his dreams. I imagined them to be dreams of us happy together and of good things to come, but escaping into his dreams was not enough anymore. Drugs helped him to maintain a reality of his own creation. In his newfound reality there was no room me. Everything that he loved about me he began to despise. My beauty, my success, my friends — everything. The only time he ever seemed content was when he was asleep. .

We had fought before, but never like this. As I watched him sleep that night, my eyes were once again swelling shut from the blows they had endured from his fists. I was so sick of his shit. I stumbled into the bathroom and that's when a started feeling my mind slip. The bathroom floor was covered with towels, toiletry containers, and clumps of my hair. When I looked into the mirror, I was stunned. I could not believe that he could do this to me. My whole face was swollen. My bottom lip was slip open and there were bald spots where braids used to be. That son of a bitch had snatched out half of my braids.

I felt numb and empty inside. As I turned away from the mirror and walk back into the bedroom, the evidence of his attack became even more apparent to my body. My side was aching from him kicking me around the bathroom floor. It felt as though knives had cut into my ass. I could feel an intense stinging sensation as the blood seeped down the back of my thighs. I stood at the foot of the bed in a daze. Watching him sleep so peacefully after what he had done to me, I became more and more angry. Each breath that he took was a waste of God's good air. Suddenly, a calm felling came over me. It felt like I was outside of my body and someone else had control of me. I just wanted him to sleep. I just wanted him to remain in that special place that brought him the joy and happiness that we never shared. I just wanted him to rest in peace.

As I walk into the kitchen, it was as if I had become someone else. I grabbed a knife from the dish rack and slowly walked back into the bedroom. By this time Johnny had rolled over onto his back. He was layin' there with his chest fully exposed and arms spread wide. It seemed like he, somehow knew what was coming and was lying there waiting for it to happen.

I looked at this man one last time. His smooth brown skin, his baby face, and his curly brown hair and then — I snapped. Before I knew what I had done, I plunged that knife into him so hard and so many times, that the palms of my hands were bruised and cut up. I don't know how many times I stabbed him, but if the condition of my hands were any indication — I must have truly fucked him up. At peace with what I had done. I quickly cleaned myself up and packed a bag. I went through each of his pockets and got all of the money he had on him. I walk over to the bed and looked at him. His eyes were wide open. He seemed to be staring at the ceiling, like he was surprised about something. I remember there was blood coming out of his mouth and he was making this kinda — gurgling noise, like he might be trying to breath or something. Thinking that he would be dead before they got there. I called 911 and acted as though I was next door reporting domestic violence and then I left. That was the last time I saw Johnny. I called you from the bus station, said my good-byes and got the hell out of Atlanta. I called my mother told her it was over between Johnny and me and that I needed to come home. With concern in her voice, she said, "Come on home." It wasn't until I got to my mothers house, that I fell apart." Four months later I found out that Johnny was alive. I didn't know whether to be happy I didn't kill him or pissed that he wasn't dead. And frankly I think I was more pissed.

I sat silently and absorbed all that he shared. I sit here thinking about how some one as strong and independent as Max could get himself in that kind of situation and stay for as long as he did. Uncertain of what I should or shouldn't say, I take a deep breath and say, "Well you are home now and I'm glad that you are back. We don't have to talk about this any more if you don't want to, but I'm here if you need me." Max smiles and says, "Let's get out of this house. Child I need feel the sun on my face and the wind on my skin." We both get dressed and head toward the nearest mall. Shopping always lefts Max's spirit.

-New Beginnings-

It's October in Atlanta. The Sun is shining. The wind is cool and dry. As we ride down Peachtree St., I realize once again what a clean and well-groomed city Atlanta is. It has its share of bad neighborhoods, but for the most part Atlanta has a very clean and fresh air about it. Suddenly Max says in a low voice, "I know what *I* want to do." I am afraid to ask so I pause and listen. Max continues, "It's nice and warm today. Let's go somewhere and boy-watch. You know I love to watch the men honey. It's after 3 PM. Child let's grab something to eat and go to the park." I smile and say, "Cool". We stop by this little Creole Café near the park. It's one of my favorite places to eat and even though we had a large breakfast, I could not resist an order of red beans and rice. We go

up to the counter and order two Shrimp Po Boy sandwiches and two large iced teas and, of course I ordered some red beans and rice.

We sit at one of the little wooden tables in the dining area out in front of the small Café and sip our iced teas while we wait for our food. It's about 3:30 PM. and the rush hour traffic is already beginning build up on Peachtree St.. Across the street from the café they are building some kind of office building or something. We sit and watch the construction workers as they prepare to leave for the day. One of the workmen walks by and grabs Miss Max's full attention. As Max observes this chunky young man, he says, "Oh my. They are always building something in this town. I think we have more apartments than we have people to live in them." I laugh and say, "Well, yea, it's changed a lot. Mostly due to the Olympic Games giving us all of that international exposure last year. As Max continues to watch one worker after the other walk by, I ask, "Are you looking at the construction or the construction workers?" We both laugh. I pause and look at Max and for the first time it really hits home that we are both thirty years old. Suddenly I became bombarded with memories of he and I in High School down in Columbus GA. I began thinking about all of the goals we had set for ourselves as teens and where we are now. We both talked about reaching certain incomes by a certain ages, you know, things like that. My mind had wondered of into this state of the union/self evaluation mode. As my attention drifts back into our conversation, I guess he could tell that there was something on my mind.

He looks at me and says, "Earth to Louie. Earth to Louie. Where did your mind drift of to? Are you and Shorty having problems or something." I smile and say, "No. Shorty and me are doing just fine." Max rolls his eyes and says, "Um hum. If you say so." Wondering where he was coming from I asked, "What do you mean?" Smiling as if he is afraid that he has wondered into a place that may get a bit messy he replies, "Well I'll just spill it. You guys have been together about two years and it seems like you two are still dating. Some weekends and an evening hear and there. It's not like the two of you live in different cities. It's like you guys are stuck in this state of… perpetual dating. What's up with that?" I smile thoughtfully, realizing that he is genuinely concerned and a bit nosey, and reply, "Well until now I never really thought about it." Max laughs, "Oh please. You're the king of white houses and picket fences. How are you g'on sit hear and tell me you haven't thought about it." I smile, and pause for a moment and before I can reply, Max continues, "Look, I just want to be sure that you are happy. And it just seems odd that you guys are still keeping it so light after all this time." I look up and answer, "Well you do know me better than most people and there are times when I do want more time with Shorty than I have now. I guess both like having our space." Max gives me a blank stare. I continue, "Okay, yes I want more, but he does not seem to be able to give more than he does now… to a relationship."

Max smiles and says, "My track record with men is horrible, but hear is some brotherly advice. Always be realistic about the things you are willing to give and need to receive to maintain a good relationship. And never settle for anyone that does not share the same vision of what you want in a relationship. You will only set your self up for abuse and failure. I know from first hand experience. Louie you have been such a good friend to

me over the years. When no one could stand the sight of Miss Max you were there. It's very important to me that you are happy." Just then our food arrives. Rather than going to the park, we decide to eat at the café and continue our conversation. After thinking about what Max said and knowing that he is the one person on earth that I could not bull shit, I replied, "Shorty is many of the things that I like in a man. He is thoughtful, caring, career minded, and he is very involved with many of the local youth organizations. In the beginning, you know, when we met I was working full-time and in school full-time so anything that was too intense had to take a back seat. Now that I have more time on my hands it's kinda hard to keep myself focused, you know." Max says, " Um hum. I know and that little trick you met at the airport knows too." We both laugh. Max says, "Damn he was fine. That yo-homie, Trade Teddy bear. I think I know that Steve." I ask, "Where do you know him from." Max continues, "I don't know to many green eyed Black folks. I could be mistaken, but he looks like one of my x-lover Johnny's runnin' buddies." Looking concerned, because I knew the kinda thugs Johnny used to run around with, I ask, " Are you sure?" Max replies "Um hum. As a matter of fact, you know him too. Steve was a little bitty skinny thug about six years ago.

He was one of those kids that was to young to get in the bar and would hang around outside." I smile and say, "Yea. I think so, but when I met him two years ago at a house party, I couldn't figure out where I knew him from. He just struck up a conversation with me and we have been cool ever since." Max smiles and says, "Whose house party." I reply, "He and his lover, Marty." Max gets this glazed over look on his face and says, "Child are they still together? Oh my God. That's who he was dropin' off at the airport when he was tryin' to pick you up." I smile and say, "Now Max it wasn't like that. We just cool like that. You know." Max begins looking at something behind me. I continue eating, thinking he has spotted a man or something. Max says, "Speak of the devil and feel the heat." *He always uses these old-time, Southern expressions*. "Who is it Max", I ask almost scared to turn around. Max gets this evil grin on his face and says, "It's that little Trade Teddy Bear of yours." Just then I feel these two big hands grab my shoulders as a voice says, "What's up boys. What's up." It's Steve.

Max grins from ear-to-ear as if all hell would break loose. He loves mess and the dirtier the better. He also realizes that Steve does not remember him as Johnny's lover. Max, still smiling says, "Oh wont you please join us? My treat." I kick him in the leg, under the table. Steve replies, "Well I am kinda hungry." Max replies, "Oh why not? Marty is out of town honey. Live a little. Hell, live a lot." "Max!" I say looking surprised. Steve asks, "You know Marty?" Max enjoying every moment of this replies, "Yes. I've known Marty for years. We used to work in the same hair solon. We became very well acquainted. I know you too." Steve smiles and says, "Really!" I think to my self, *"On my Lord Max is going to eat him up."* Max grins that evil grin and says, "Yes my child. Didn't you used to runaround with Johnny Black." While pulling up a chair Steve answers, "Yea that was my boy back in the day. We were real tight until this crazy bitch he used to live with cut him up over a year ago. I guess Johnny had it coming though. He just wasn't right at all. He was always high and pickin' fights all the time and shit. It was like he went fuckin' crazy or something." Suddenly Steve stops talking and gives Max a

long hard look. Max smiles and says, “Yes. I’m that bitch. Oh and by the way are you still on the pipe or are you back in recovery again?”

Steve looks down at the table. Not knowing what to do I say, “Max did you have to go there?” Max cackles and says; “Well you know how us crazy bitches are. Ain’t that right Steve.” Steve looks up and says, “Well you had to be crazy to stay with him the way he used to dog you. I didn’t mean any disrespect, but you know how he was. And by the way I’ve been clean for two years now. When I met you I was Johnny’s NA sponsor and we both know how that turned out.” Max and Steve smile at one another and I feel a since of relief. I smile and say, “Can’t we all just get along or at least get along until I finish eating. Max you haven’t been in town one full day and you are already raisin’ hell.” Steve and Max look at each other and both say, “Cool.”

Max says, “I need a drink child. Waitress! Miss girl I need you!” As the waiter came to the table Steve looks at me, smiles and asks, “What are you guys doing down here, just hanging out.” I reply, “Yea, I took some time off to help Max get reacquainted with the city.” By now waiter is at the table, Max says, “I need a Bourbon and Seven and please add to the bill whatever this poor child would like to eat and drink.” Steve orders the Catfish plate and a Coke and I just ask for a refill on my Iced Tea. After placing his order Max excuses himself and goes the restroom.

Steve whispers to me, “Is Max drunk?” I reply, “No. That’s just Max.” Steve still whispering, “Does he hate me because of that shit Johnny did.” I say, “I doubt it. I think he just wanted to work somebody’s’ nerves and you were the lucky winner.” Steve replies, “Maybe I should leave.” Steve squints his eyes as if he is trying to figure out something. I ask him, “What’s on your mind?” He smiles warmly and says, “If I told you, you may not respect me very much.” I guess the puzzled look on my face made him feel the need to explain his statement. He continued, “Well I guess… I really enjoyed running into you at the airport yesterday. It was nice. I thought about what you said. You know the thing about having my own friends and my own life. Well I wonder if you and me could hang out some time. Would that be alright?” Smiling, but still puzzled I reply, “Sure we can hang out. It’s cool. Why would you think I wouldn’t respect you?” He starts fidgeting with the salt shaker. As he rolls it around in his fingers, he replies, “I’ve known you or at least I had been seeing you around for a while.

You always seem so low-key. It’s not that easy to find people that just like to live life with out all that pretentious shit. You seem like a *real* brother. I want to get to know you better.” I pause for a moment and think about his offer of “friendship” and I can’t help but wonder if that is all he really wants or if that’s all I really want. Getting honest with myself, I have to admit that I could have misinterpreted his signals at the airport. Maybe I saw what I wanted to see. Maybe Max is right about my settling for this part-time relationship with Shorty rather than going for the kind of relationship I really want. Maybe that’s why Steve is such a fuckin turn-on. Maybe if I were as into Shorty as I should be, Steve wouldn’t work my nerves the way he does. Afraid to say any of the things that crossed my mind, I reply, “Sure. We can hang out. I still don’t get why did you think that was disrespectful. Hasn’t Marty encouraged you to make friends?

Everyone knows that you hate all of his friends." Steve continues fidgeting with the salt shaker. I watch him as he gazes at it as if he is searching for something that it may contain. I ask, "You have a lot on your mind don't you?" Steve gives me this serious almost sad look and says, "Man I just need some one to talk to about some things. You know?"

Max returns to the table and with a very serious look on his face. I guess when he noticing how pitiful Steve's demeanor has become, makes him feel the need to apologize. Max says, "I'm sorry if I was rude to you Steve. Seeing you brought up all of these old, nasty memories and I guess I got a little bitter. Please don't leave. I'm just a Queen that loves to *read* and you are an easy target." We all laugh. The waiter brings over Max's cocktail and Steve's food and I just can't wait for all of this to be over. As I continue eating, Steve tells Max all about Marty's Salon and Marty's contracts with production companies. As Steve talks I watch Max's facial expressions and try to figure out what evil thing he is going to say next. We finished our meals and it was time for desert. We all ordered the Mississippi Mud Bread Pudding. While waiting on our deserts to arrive, Max leans forward and smiles at Steve. I think to myself, *"Hear we go."* Max says, "Steve how old are you baby." Steve smiles and answers, "Twenty Five." Max pauses and replies, "Aren't you a little young for Miss Marty. I mean, when I met Marty back in '89. He wasn't tellin' anybody how old he was and I'm sure he was in his late thirties even then. Why you wit that old man."

Steve answers, "Well, when I met him I was strung out on drugs real bad. I was homeless. In spite of all of my shit, he believed in me. He took me in and gave me a second chance. After I moved in things just kinda happened, you know. We been together ever since. It's been over four years now." Max grins and says, "Oh I know" and before he could spit any more venom on this poor boys soul, the waiter comes and serves our deserts. I look across at Max in a way that lets him know I was starting to get tiered of his madness. Steve says, "You were saying Max." Max takes a deep breath and continues, "I was saying that I know how it is fall in love with some one that has been so kind." Steve gives him an odd look as if he knew there was something behind that statement.

As we finish eating deserts, Steve asks Max, "Are you still in the beauty business, because if you are Marty needs someone the manage his Salon full time? I'm sure Marty would like to hear from you anyway." Max replies, "Well, I used to own a shop years ago. Hell, ain't doin' nothin' else right now." As Steve goes into more detail about the kind of person Marty wants to run the Salon, my mind wonders. I sit listening to them and thinking about what Max said about Shorty and me. I ponder over Steve's mixed signals and my mixed feelings about those signals. I guess it was pretty obvious that I was deep in thought. I snap out of it as Max says, "Louie I know all this shop talk must be boring you, but it seems like you almost left the table. Where did your mind wonder off to?" I smile and say, "We can talk about it latter." We finish our desert and they exchange numbers. As Steve stands up to leave, I notice how good he looks in his Khaki pants, white button-down shirt, and tie. We all stand and Steve says his good byes. He shakes Max's hand and tells him that Marty may be calling him from the West Coast.

Max says, "I'll get our coats Louie. Steve I'm looking forward to hearing from Marty. Thanks again."

I extend my hand to Steve, as if would only shack my hand. He grabbed my hand and pulled me in. Steve said, "You should know better than that." He placed those big hands of his on the small of my back and pulled closer to him. I could feel the warmth of his body though his cloths. As I wrapped my arms around his shoulders, he pulled in tight. I could feel his massive bulge against my thigh as we hugged. Feeling the warmth of his thigh against my piece began to arouse me. It took all that I had to keep my dick from getting hard. The hug only lasts for a second or two, but it seems like a lifetime as he holds me there. It is as if he knows that he gets me hot and enjoys toying with me. Steve whispers in my ear, "Call me… Please." His lips and mustache tickle my ear, as that deep voice of his makes chills run through me. I notice that his bulge is becoming firm in his pants. I could not speak. I just nodded nervously and hoped that calling him wouldn't start something that I couldn't finish. Steve leaves two dollars on the table, glances up at me one last time and with out a word he was gone. He is unlike any one I've ever met. He seems older than his twenty-five years and yet he's like a breath of fresh air.

Max returns to the table and looks at me as if he thought I was up to something. He says, "I've already paid for everything. Are you ready to go?" I say, "Sure. Where would you like to go next?" Max stretches and says, "Child I'm so full. I guess sittin' up all night talking and drinking and gettin' up so early this morning has finally caught up with me. Boy I just want to go lay down." As we put on our coats and make our way to my car, he notices that I still seem distracted. Max says, "Steve didn't upset you did he? It is cool that he wants to be friends and all, but I get the feeling Mr. Trade has more on his mind than just hanging out. And so do you." I reply, " It's funny. Shorty and I have been seeing each other for over two years and in all that time I have never once been moved by any other man the way that boy moves me. And I guess it's different because he's not some new person that I have never seen before. He flirts, but hell doesn't everybody. I try not to put to much into it." Max responds, "Well child, if you go there you g'on have to put a lot into it. Did you see the ass on that boy." We both laugh as we get into the car. I start the car and before we pull off and head back to my place I say, "Well no matter how I feel about that young man, I have to remember that he and I are both otherwise involved." Max glares at me, "Bitch please! What you have I don't call a relationship and we all know Miss Marty don't have no problems paying for her boys, including Steve." I look at Max and say, "You are bitter aren't you?" We both laugh again as I start my journey through rush hour traffic.

Max must have really been tiered. He slept all the way back to my place. We get back to my place and the first thing Max does is through his coat on the couch and stretch out on the two large pillows on the floor in front of the television. Max groans, "Oh child. I was so excited about coming back home that I didn't sleep for two days. These pillows feel so good." I think to my self, "*He must be exhausted. He never lays in the floor.*" I ask him, "Do you need a blanket or anything." Max snores and rolls over. He is out cold.

I get a blanket from the closet, cover him with it and retire to my room. It's been a long two days. As I walk up stairs to my room, I think about how great it is that Max is back in my life. I really missed my buddy.

Even though it's only 8 PM., I'm ready to take a shower, put on some shorts and a T-shirt and chill out in front of the television for the rest of the evening. While I shower and get ready for nice quite evening of my own company, I can't help but think about Shorty and Steve. A part of me feels very loyal to Shorty, but another part of me wonders why? Every time we talked about commitment and our future together, Shorty states that we shouldn't rush it. He said that it should just happen. Mean while I come home to an empty apartment and a lonely bed.

It's strange. Until I met Steve I was content with the arrangement that Shorty and I have. Now I'm beginning to realize that Max might be right. Maybe I am settling for what I can get from Shorty just to keep from being alone, when I know that I need more than a part time relationship. Not to say that Steve is the one, but meeting someone like him makes a brother think. Steve has touched me in a way that arouses both my curiosity and my senses. I wonder if Steve just wants some attention, because Marty is out of town and he feels a little lonely? Maybe the only way he knows how to get to know another man is by flirting? "*He is kinda young. Maybe I'm putting way to much in to this shit.*" Not being one who likes to leave things up in the air, I decide to call him and find out what's really going on. I turn the radio on low and look for Steve's phone number. If we are going to be friends than I need to know where he is coming from. I need to know what's on his mind.

I take a deep breath and dial Steve's number. As his phone rings I wonder what I will say. If he does want more than a platonic friendship, how will I respond? By the third ring I'm ready to hang up. Then suddenly a voice says, "What's up." I pause for a moment, felling like a high school kid, and then say, "Yo Steve. It's Louie." There is a pause and then Steve says, "Hold on a minute." He has me on the speakerphone. As I wait for him to return to the phone, I can here music playing and him fumbling around with something. I say, "Steve. What are you doing?" I get know response. The music seems less loud now and his faint voice says, "I'll be right there don't hang up." I wonder what the hell he's doing. Steve picks up the phone and says, "Louie are you there." I respond, "Yea. Did I catch you at a bad time?" Steve replies, "No. I just got out of the shower. That's all. What's going on?" I reply, "Well, you tell me." We both laugh. At this point I realize how long it has been since I've thought about anybody sexually except Shorty.

I continue, "You seem to have a lot on your mind during diner and you told me to call you so I did." Steve replies, "Well… yea I do." Then there is another pause. Not knowing what to say or why I called, I ask, "How is Marty doing. Is he still out West?" Steve replies, "Yea. He won't be back for another week." I ask, "What do you occupy your time with while he's gone?" Steve replies, "Well frankly I just enjoy the space. Your buddy Max is right about one thing Marty is old. Not that his age matters, but after I got clean and got my head together I realized that we had nothing in common. I guess

the reason I still live with him is because I feel so obligated to him. Connected to him in some way." I think about what he is saying and reply, "You know, obligation may not be the best thing to build a relationship on." Steve replies, "Man don't I know it. Marty says that he needs me, please don't move out and all that shit. I just don't want him to touch me. We haven't been, you know, sexual in quite sometime. I have had my own room for years. Now it's like I'm his houseboy or something. He sends money home. I pay the bills and keep the house clean." I respond, "Well if you let people take care of you sometime they think the own you." "Yea!" Steve says, "Like a pet or something. But you know what, when I met him I had heard that he was one of those sugar daddy types. A lot of times he would have parties to meet young boys. You know the ones that are too young to get into the clubs.

That's how I met him. I was so doped up I didn't care, but it's time-out for all that shit now. Puzzled, I ask, "What do you mean?" He continues, "Well, I look back and I feel blessed to be alive, you know. Even though my life was a mess, Marty could tell that I had the potential to do more with my life than hustling and doing drugs. He always said, 'When you get yourself together you're going to leave me'." Felling a little catty, I ask, "Well isn't it true?" He pauses for a moment, then responds, "Hey, I've have tried to be real with Marty over the years. I pay my own way. It seems like the more I try to show him that it's not about him taking care of me, the more he seems to pull away."

Confused, I ask, "Why do you think Marty pulls away from you?" He says, "Oh I know why. It's a control thing. Because I don't fully depend on him, He can't dictate anything to me. It's like the moment I got a mind of my own and an education and a real job, he started backing away from me. And another thing, on the real tip, I think I'm getting' a little too old for Marty. I noticed that he is starting to throw more parties than he used to. And I know for a fact that when he is on the road he likes to take his boys with him.
I Laugh out loud, "Stop bullshitting!" He laughs, "For real man. When I started going back to college and couldn't travel, he started giving me a hard time. I was thinking , 'Hell we could have more and do more things together once I got my life back on track' Marty wasn't tryin' to hear that."

I ask, "So what are you going to do? I mean, It sounds like he is seeing other people. Are you guys more like roommates now or something?" He sighs and says, "I guess. We don't have sex of any kind. I know two of the boys that he sees. We sleep in separate rooms But the fucked up part is, I think really love that old son-of-a-bitch. He believed in me. He helped me get my head right, you know. I don't understand why Marty's feelings changed. It's like one day he woke up and was a different person. I know he cares about me, but it's not at all like I care for him. Until I met you… " Then there was a long pause. Afraid of what he might say, I respond, "You know, you have been through a lot for such a young brother." "I guess." he says in a low, depressed whimper. I continue, "Look why don't we hang out. You could meet some of my friends. Maybe make some new friends, you know." Sounding interested in this offer of friendship, Steve responds, "I'd like that. I've wanted to get to know you anyway. You seem like a real brother."

Steve and I talk about getting together hanging out later in the month. It seems that we have a lot in common. We both get in to art, poetry, and the same kinds of music. I look forward to spending time with him and introducing him to some of the poets and artists in my social circle. After our conversation I felt relieved and perhaps a little disappointed that it did not turn sexual. That whole situation with Steve and Marty is like a puzzle with pieces missing. Marty's reputation is not one promotes keeping boys around for any length of time. About a year ago, at a party, I heard Marty say, "Men are like fashion accessories my dear. They should change with the seasons and when they get old you simply buy some more." Why does he cling to Steve and not wont him sexually. Steve really seems to need some one to talk things out with. Maybe I was reading him wrong. Maybe my need for attention allowed me to see what I wanted to see. By now it's already 11 o'clock and I'm sure that Shorty is sleeping. I set my clock for 6 AM. So that I can call him first thing in the morning, then drift of to sleep.

-True Colors-

As fall turns to winter, the days grow short and winds are cold, especially at night. It's Mid November. The colorful leaves that shelter the trees swirl through air and fall to the earth leaving the trees' limbs and branches to face the cold winter winds bare and unprotected. Kinda like colorful words can mask deeper feelings and complete honesty leaves your heart bare to face cold uncertainty. The air that swirls around uncertainty can be as chilling as any winter wind….

Max has been back in town four weeks now. He is working as Marty's manager at the hair solon as well as helping Marty manage his contracts with production companies. Business is booming. It's the holiday season and everyone wants to be beautiful for holiday dinners, parties, and functions. Sitting at my desk in the corner of the dinning area, I gaze out of the window and work on a poem. I observe the wonder of the seasons changing from the warm clear autumn colors into winters' many shades of gray. It makes me think about how clear my feelings used to be about Shorty and how uncertain they are now. The weeks have rolled by and we still haven't gotten any closer to resolving Short's issues about taking our relationship to a deeper level. On the other hand, Steve and I have become very good friends. Apart of me wishes that we could be more than just friends.

I snap out of my daze to the sound Max's voice as he walks into to the dinning area. "Louie I'm telling you… I don't see how the hell Marty ran this shop and handled those contracts on his own. All I do is handle the paper work and help him manage his funds and I may need a part time assistant if business stays this good." I reply, " Well Max, when your old clients found out you were back in town it nearly doubled Marty's business, according to Marty." Max laughs, "I didn't want to go there, but you know, what can I say? The funny part is I have to refer most of them to the beauticians on staff because I just don't have time to do anything but paper work. What are you working on?" I reply, "Some poetry. A piece about bare branches." Max frowns, "Oh Lord, here you go with that deep shit can't nobody understand, but you. Why do you have to be so abstract? Just say what's on your mind and be done." I reply sarcastically, knowing full

well Max is just trying to give me a hard time; "If I just said it straight out, it wouldn't be art. It wouldn't capture the full range of." Max cuts me off laughing, "Oh get over it child! I'm sorry I asked."

Max looks at the screen of the laptop computer and reads the poem.

Bare Branches-
Bare branches unsheltered from winds
Naked for all the world to see
No shelter to mask or protect
The rain and cold fall harsh upon me

The flora of spring, summer and autumn
Are no more…It is winter
Winter reveals the true strength of the tree
The beauty of its bare branches

Reaching up to gray thankless skies
Fruitless they extend upward
Unmasked they remain erect
As they have in the other seasons

Will you be there?
Will you remain vested?
Will you welcome my bare branches?

When the seasons change
When the clear colors of other seasons
Turn to shades of winter gray
When the cold winds blow

When the leaves fall
When truths are revealed
When reality is unveiled
When harsh winter winds swirl

Will you shine warm on my branches?
Will you encourage a new beginning?
Will you stay with me until the next spring?

"What do the bear branches represent?" Max asked impatiently. I reply, "Well to me leaves are first impressions or a person's outer self. The branches are the inner selves of people. Though they may be masked, they remain a constant reality. The seasons represent the ups and downs of relationships. Winter being the hard times and spring being the point at which the hard times are overcome." Max gives me a smirk and says,

"Who's reality are you questioning, Mr. Man? Who's truth do you want revealed? Seems like wintertime in Shorty's world. Are his branches getting' hard to clime Homie? Is it summertime in Steve's world? Hot and sunny…. Do you want to pull back his leaves and see what kind of branches he's packin' Mr. Man?" I laugh and reply, "I must admit Steve is one tree that seems worth climbing." We both laugh as I fold up my laptop and put it away. Max has been so busy lately that we have not had a chance to talk about Shorty or Steve or my feelings about either of them.

Max asks, "So what's up with you and Steve. You to sure spend a lot of time together. Are you sure y'all are just friends?" I smile, "I do enjoy his company, but he's kinda rough around the edges. You know, those baggy clothes and the way his dreads nearly cover his face completely." Max gets a sneaky grin on his face as if he had something to say. I pause for a moment, wondering what evil thought crossed his mind, then I continue. "We laugh a lot and he enjoys the art exhibits and poetry readings." Looking puzzled Max Replies, "That crowd you hang with at those poetry readings is something else. They're a bunch of drama queens and want-to-be celebrities. Child they get on my nerves. Steve likes those people?" I glare at Max, "Yes, and I do too. Steve does not write poetry but he seems to appreciate it. Unlike some *queens* I could mention." Max smiles, "Okay Louie, I'll leave your people alone. Lord knows I don't want to get you started."

Max, still smiling, says softly, "So…what else does Steve like? Don't tell me it's all been about poetry and art, cause I remember how it started." I reply, "We just have not crossed that line. We don't talk about Shorty or Marty and we don't flirt with each other. So, I guess our friendship is just that… a friendship. Underneath those bushy dreads and mustache and those baggy, oversized clothes is a really sweet and sensitive guy." Max rolls his eyes and says, "Um-hum. You know you're sittin' on a time bomb. You run around here introducing him to all these people and taking him to all of these places when you know full well that boy wants you. Child it's just a matter of time. And what does Shorty think about all of this *friendship* your sharing with Steve. Have you told him?" I take a deep breath and reply, "Yes I told Shorty about Steve. I told that we hang out from time to time. He does not seem to have a problem with it." Max squints his eyes at me. He smiles as if he sees something deep in my soul. Like he knows something is about to happen. Before he could respond, I conveniently remember that it is time for me to head to the art center for a poetry reading. "Gotta' go I'm running late."

I jump into my care and head to Mid-town. On the way to the art center, I give myself a pep talk about keeping things platonic between Steve and me. I'm so glad I've gotten past that lustful stage with him. But every now and then, when he is sitting next to me at a function or even when we talk on the phone, I get so aroused. It's hard to contain myself, but now I feel more like his big brother. He asks me for tips about dressing a lot. I think he wants to change his style, but he is not sure just what to do. We talked on the telephone, one day last week.

I remember he said, "I don't think my look and my personality go together. I mean people think I'm some kinda hood-rat or something." I advised, "Well for me the rule of

thumb is: How you dress can most often determine how people will approach you. You know like, if you want to attract a conservative man you may have to dress conservative to get his attention." After brief pause, he asked, "What about Shorty? I mean, what was it about him that turned your head back in the day?" I smiled and said, "Shorty has this way of saying things with out words. A kind of silent intensity." He laughed, "Oh, you like that strong silent kinda shit." We both laughed. Steve is really nice. He doesn't realize it, but he has the same kind of intensity that Shorty has. He just hasn't learned how to work it.

Tonight will be the third time that we will have hung out in the last two weeks. I always make sure that we meet and hang out in public places. It's safer that way. We meet at the movies and we depart from the movies or poetry reading or whatever it is we decide to do that evening. I really don't want him to think that I still want him.

I love poetry readings, especially the Gay ones. The sounds of my Gay brothers and sister sharing their poetry and songs give me a wonderful feeling inside. A healing feeling. Steve wants us to meet at tonight's poetry reading. He left a message on my answering machine yesterday and said that he has a surprise for me. I'm almost scared to find out what it is, but I can't wait to see him. I really enjoy having someone to share this part of my life with. Shorty doesn't care for poetry or any of my artsy friends. So, he doesn't come to hear me read very often. Until I started hanging out with Steve, I often went alone.

Pulling up into the parking lot, I recognize two of my friends walking toward the art center. I've gotten there late and have to go to the far side of the parking lot. As I lock my car door, one calls out, "Louie. Are you going to read tonight?" I reply, "You know better! Tonight's theme is erotica." We laugh as walk into the building together. Everyone who knows me knows I never read erotic poetry. I write it, but I'm much too bashful to read it myself. Walking inside I take a quick glance over the crowd to find that Steve has saved a seat for me near the isle, four rows from the front. The poets have already started reading. I slip in quietly and take my seat.

As I sit down I notice that Steve is looking better than usual. His face is nearly clean-shaven. His shoulder length dreads, rather covering most of his face, are pulled back into a ponytail. His sideburns and mustache are trimmed down into thin lines that frame his face and lips. Stunned by this transformation from rough-neck trade to well groomed gentleman, I ask, "What's up with the new look? Is this the surprise you had for me? " Glancing out of the corner of his eyes, he smiles and replies, "Maybe. Yo like you said. Sometimes it's good to make a change. There are some people in my life that I want to take me more seriously." Then Steve bites his bottom lip as if he was trying to keep from smiling, but his dimples are a dead giveaway. He seems to know that I'm impressed.

One poet after the other reads, but I can't seem to get into what they are saying. I can't seem to keep my eyes off of Steve. Trying not to stare at him, I force my attention to the front of the room and watch the artists perform and share their poetry. Each time Steve leans over to make comments about poets and singers, the smell of his cologne and the

sound of his whispering baritone voice give me goose bumps. I think to myself, "*Just when I thought I had control of whatever attraction I had for this thick sexy mutha' fucka', he shows up looking and smelling like this. Damn he's frustrating me!* My nerves are worked, but I can get through this. Scared of what may happen, I can't wait for all of this to be over. I take a deep breath and regain my composure. Sitting hear determined not to let this young man keep me upset, I wonder if he knows he has this affect on me. A part of me really wants him. Another part of me knows that if I get anything started with this man it would change everything in my life. Why must life be so complicated?

Just when I think I've got myself together, the M.C. comes to the microphone and throws me for a loop. He says, "Are you having a good time people? I said are you having a good time?" The crowd responds by clicking their fingers and giving various other responses. The M.C. continues, " The next young artist is new to the poetry seen. He has requested that we play the slow groove version of the hit song 'Something, Something'. Well, *alllllright* then… Give some love to Mr. Steven Jenkins!" All I could do was stare.

It isn't until Steve stands and walks to the microphone that I notice what he's warring. He usually wares big fitting shirts and baggy, oversized jeans. Tonight he's dressed in a form fitting black, silk turtleneck and a pair of well-tailored, black, pleated slacks. As he makes his way to the microphone, I watch his thick well-toned frame glide masculinity to the front of the room. Having his dreads pulled back and being dressed so neatly, it was as if he had become a different person. Once I got over the shock of seeing this man's transformation, I got excited about the fact that he was going to read his poetry. I never thought he would write let a lone read poetry out loud and in front of people. Stunned by this surprise that Steve has blessed me with I sit here and stare in amazement.

Smiling like a bashful ten-year-old, Steve begins to speak. "This is my first time writing and reading poetry. I guess I was finally given the right inspiration." Someone in the crowd says, "Okay then boy. You better be inspired." He glances up at me and then continues, " It's my first time reading and my first time writing. So, I thought It would be phat for my first piece to be about first times." His striking looks, low rumbling voice, and bashful demeanor captured the audience's full attention.

The crowd was silent as he motioned for the soundman to start the music. His look turns more serious. He gazes at me intensely with those fiery green eyes and in a deep, fervent voice he slowly recites the poem from memory.

-The Night Max Left Atlanta -

By Marco Sanders 8/27/97

You know, the things that happened the night I left Atlanta changed me forever. I don't think I'll ever love anyone like I loved that man. It was like I was crazy — possessed by demons or some kinda shit. Oh, and stupid — Child, if you only knew the half of it. Sometimes when you are in love you can go of into a dream world to try and hid from reality. Girl, that night I woke up. When you wake from the dream it never seems quite as sweet. Hell, Child, I woke up to a nightmare.

It was the day before my birthday and in spite of how fucked-up our relationship was, I looked forward to spending that time with Johnny. I had just gotten my hair braided, my nails manicured and I was feeling quite cute. That night I took a long hot bath, you know, burned some incense, and listened to a little jazz. You know, just being good to myself. We hadn't been fighting for two or three weeks and I was in a real good mood. Things weren't really any better, but I tried to make the best of it. I was still "dreaming", *okay*. Because, you know, other than selling rocks, he never could keep a job. And when he started smoking up his inventory — you know Miss Max started really seeing the light, but, "Oh- no— I could *save* him." Well anyway, I was feeling quite lovely after my bath, cause, you know, Miss Calgon Bath Oil Beads had truly taken me away. I was in the bathroom, you know, in the mirror styling my braids and humming along with music on the radio and in he walks.

It was just one more night of him coming home drunk and high on whatever. Johnny came in all funky and smelling like weed and malt-liquor and shit. He wanted to kiss all over me and started pulling on my dick and shit, you know, being all nasty and rough, in all the *wrong* ways. I just was not having it. Not tonight. I pushed him away and he grabbed me by my braids with both hands and said, "Oh, you too pretty tonight? I can't touch you?" Usually when he came in like that, to keep from having to fight or go through all kinds of drama, I either gave in to him or gave him some more liquor, so that he would pass out and leave me the hell alone. Other times he would come in so geeked-up on acid and shit that he would force his self on me, whether I wanted him to fuck me or not. He thought that would be the case that night, but it was a *new* day.

We argued and fought for a while and he seemed even more evil than usual. Tired of going through this shit, I suddenly felt a since of peace fall over me. I had made up my mind. I could not live like that anymore. He was too strong to fight off. Child, you remember how big and tall Johnny was. I just said, "Here it is. Take it." He looked at me, almost like he had sobered up a little. I got even more pissed, "What's wrong mutha-fucka you can't hear? Hell, you done whopped my ass for it — you scared to get up in it?" And what did I say that for? Child, he snatched me up by my braids, through me down and kicked my ass all around the bathroom and into the bedroom. It was awful. Johnny said , "Black bitch! I'ma show yo ass!" He kicked me in my stomach so hard, that I almost black out. I remember him forcing his dick in me so hard It felt as though my ass had just split open.. How could some one who used to love me so much

beat me and fuck me like I was less than trash. And further more, what kind of sick bitch was I to stay with him. It seemed to go on and on for hours. Child, I hollered and screamed when he fucked me. When I quite hollering he beat me and fucked me some more. I don't remember him stopping. When I came to my scenes he was laying next to me on the bed passed out cold.

I remember staring at him for hours that night, watching him and thinking about how peaceful, and child-like he was when he was sleeping. I thought back on how gorgeous this man was and how good things could have been. How great things used to be. How the touch of his huge hands soothed me and the sound of his deep, husky voice aroused all of my scenes. We would drink and laugh and have wild sex. Oh could that man work my body. He was so gentle and patient with me, but even then I could barely take him all — *you know*. Yeah , he was a rough neck hood, but there was a very sweet side to him that few people got to see. A side that began to hide from me as well. Johnny's sweet and gentle side turned cold and uncaring. What used to feel so good began felling cold, cheap, and — painful. I thought that this dark side of his personality was just phase or, you know, a mood or something. Child, it tuned out to be that boy's true colors shining through.

Needless to say, he was a very troubled man. The world was not a kind place for him. Perhaps he found an escape when he slipped into his dreams. I imagined them to be dreams of us happy together and of good things to come, but escaping into his dreams was not enough anymore. Drugs helped him to maintain a reality of his own creation. In his new found reality there was no room me. Everything that he loved about me he began to despise. My beauty, my success, my friends — everything. The only time he ever seemed content was when he was asleep. .

We had fought before, but never like this. As I watched him sleep that night, my eye's were once again swelling shut from the blows they had endured from his fists. I was so sick of his shit. I stumbled into the bathroom and that's when a started feeling my mind slip. The bathroom floor was covered with towels, toiletry containers, and clumps of my hair. When I looked into the mirror, I was stunned. I could not believe that he could do this to me. My whole face was swollen. My bottom lip was slip open and there were bald spots where braids used to be. That son of a bitch had snatched out half of my braids.

I felt numb and empty inside. As I turned away from the mirror and walk back into the bedroom, the evidence of his attack became even more apparent to my body. My side was aching from him kicking me around the bathroom floor. It felt as though knives had cut into my ass . I could feel an intense stinging sensation as the blood seeped down the back of my thighs. I stood at the foot of the bed in a daze. Watching him sleep so peacefully after what he had done to me, I became more and more angry. Each breath that he took was a waste of God's good air. Suddenly, a calm felling came over me. It felt like I was outside of my body and someone else had control of me. I just wanted him to sleep. I just wanted him to remain in that special place that brought him the joy and happiness that we never shared. I just wanted him to rest in peace.

As I walk into the kitchen, it was as if I had become someone else. I grabbed a knife from the

dish rack and slowly walked back into the bedroom. By this time Johnny had rolled over onto his back. He was layin' there with his chest fully exposed and arms spread wide. It seemed like he, somehow knew what was coming and was layin' there waitin' for it to happen.

I looked at this man one last time. His smooth brown skin, his baby face, and his curly brown hair and then — I snapped. Before I knew what I had done, I plunged that knife into him so hard and so many times, that the palms of my hands were bruised and cut up. I don't know how many time I stabbed him, but if the condition of my hands were any indication — I must have truly fucked him up. At peace with what I had done. I quickly cleaned myself up and packed a bag. I went through each of his pockets and got all of the money he had on him.. I walk over to the bed and looked at him. His eyes were wide open. He seemed to be staring at the ceiling, like he was surprised about something. I remember there was blood coming out of his mouth and he was making this kinda — gurgling noise, like he might be trying to breath or something. Thinking that he would be dead before they got there. I called 911 and acted as though I was next door reporting domestic violence and then I left. That was the last time I saw Johnny. I called you from the bus station, said my goodbyes and got the hell out of Atlanta.

I called my mother told her it was over between me and Johnny and that I needed to come home. With concern in her voice she said, "Come on." It wasn't until I got to my mothers house, that I fell apart."

I Wonder

By Marko 9/4/97

As I sit here watching him, curiosity begins to take over. I wonder if he might be interested in someone like me. Could I satisfy his needs? Could he satisfy mine? If our bodies experienced sensual, erotic interactions, what would it be like? I wonder........

I wonder how he would talk to me.
How his voice would sound when he is aroused. Would its low rumble tickle my eardrums as he whispers in my ear; asking intimate questions and making intimate suggestions. While making love, would he moan and plead passionately? Would he shout, grunt or squeal. Would he be strong and silent?

I wonder how his hair feels.
How the wiry hairs of his body would feel, as my fingers roam through his bristly masses.
His kinky locks against my face, as his mustache tickles my neck. How the stubble on his face would feel against my chest and down my back and between my thighs and other discerning domains.

I wonder how his hands would touch me.
Would they gently grope and fondle my sensitive areas? Would they be strong and directive, as they finesse me into the right positions? If he rubbed my body would his hands be warm and soothing? Would they sting if he spanked me for being bad? Would they be firm and persuasive as they held my in place during our fit of passion?

I wonder how his body feels.
The warmth of his skin. The weight of his tall frame against mine; The thickness of it in my arms and between my legs; How our bodies would respond as they interact. The feel of his muscular thighs wrapped around my body or resting on my shoulders. What would it be like to rest my head in his chest and listen to his heart beat.

I wonder about his mouth.
Are his lips as smooth as they look. How the firmness and fulness of them might feel manipulating and stimulating my flesh. Would they be moist to the touch. Would his tongue taste sweet. Could it quench my thirst? Would his mouth send chills through my body as he probes and sucks and licks my neck.. my nipples..my dick..

I wonder about his ass.
What the center of his it might be like. The scent of it, as he sweats. The delicacy of it, as my tongue works its way around and in and out and around again. The feel of it as it surrounds my fingertips. The tightness of it as the head of my piece makes it's slow entry. The wetness of it as it relaxes and my dick begins to slide in and out and in, again and again.

I wonder about his dick.
How his piece would feel in my hands. Would it be smooth or veiny? If it's thick and throbbing, would the head be sensitive to the touch? What it might taste like? How it would stretch my bondries as it pushes it's way inside. The sensation of it gliding rhythmically in and out of me as we make love.

I wonder what kinds of games we might play.
Would his sexual diversions be strange and twisted? Does he want to be dominated or degraded? Would he give me commands and make me his slave? Would we indulge each others fantasies and create new ones? Might he be the type of brother that enjoys the simple pleasures of a good old-fashioned fuck session?

I sit here and daydream in silence. I wonder if he is thinking of me?

I Wonder

By Marko 9/4/97

He walks in wearing black jeans and a black suede vest, and captures my full attention. As I sit here watching him mingling and mixing, curiosity begins to take over. I wonder if he might be interested in someone like me. Could I satisfy his needs? Could he satisfy mine? If our bodies experienced sensual, erotic interactions, what would it be like? I wonder........

He's over there laughing and talking with his friends. I wonder how he would talk to me.
How his voice would sound when he is aroused. Would its low rumble tickle my eardrums as he whispers in my ear; asking intimate questions and making intimate suggestions. While making love, would he moan and plead passionately? Would he shout, grunt or squeal. Would he be strong and silent?

His eyes pear through jet black dreads. I wonder how his hair feels.
His kinky locks against my face, as his mustache tickles my neck. How the wiry hairs of his body would feel, as my fingers roam through his bristly masses. How the stubble on his face would feel against my chest and down my back and between my thighs and other discerning domains.

His wide , thick fingered hands grip his drinking glass. I wonder how he would touch me.
Would they gently grope and fondle my sensitive areas? Would they be strong and directive, as they finesse me into the right positions? If he rubbed my body would his hands be warm and soothing? Would they sting if he spanked me for being bad? Would they be firm and persuasive as they held my in place during our fit of passion?

He stands there with broad shoulders and long legs.... I wonder how his body feels.
The warmth of his skin. The weight of his tall frame against mine; The thickness of it in my arms and between my legs; How our bodies would respond as they interact. The feel of his muscular thighs wrapped around my body or resting on my shoulders. What would it be like to rest my head in his chest and listen to his heart beat.

He sips his drink and the shape his mouth makes moves me.
I wonder if his lips are as smooth as they look. How the firmness and fulness of them might feel manipulating and stimulating my flesh. Would they be moist to the touch? Would his tongue taste sweet? Could it quench my thirst? Would his mouth send chills through my body as he probes and sucks and licks my neck.. my nipples..my dick..

He turns and I notice his ass, sitting high, round, and firm.
What the center of it might be like. The scent of it, as he sweats. The delicacy of it, as my tongue works its way around and in and out and around again. The feel of it as it surrounds my fingertips. The tightness of it as the head of my piece makes it's slow entry. The wetness of it as it relaxes and my dick begins to slide in and out and in, again and again.

He turns again and I notice the bulge that rests on his inner thigh.
I wonder how his piece would feel in my hands. Would it be smooth or veiny? If it's thick and throbbing, would the head be sensitive to the touch? What it might taste like? How it would stretch my boundaries as it pushes it's way inside. The sensation of it gliding rhythmically in and out of me as we make love.

He notices me gazing at him and gives me a wicked smile. I wonder what kinds of games we might play. Would his sexual diversions be strange and twisted? Does he want to be dominated or degraded? Would he give me commands and make me his slave? Would we indulge each others fantasies and create new ones? Might he be the type of brother that enjoys the simple pleasures of a good old-fashioned fuck session?

I sit here and daydream in silence. I wonder if he is thinking of me?

WEEKENDS

By Marco Sanders

7/1/97

Thinking about all of the things that make our relationship special, the things I value most are his honesty, his compassion and most of all his sense of humor. Five foot and seven inch tall, one hundred and eighty pounds, and solid as a rock, he looks more like a truck driver than a school teacher. He is a quick wit with a very sharp tongue. If you come for him, you better be ready. We are both very busy people, with demanding careers and hectic schedules, but somehow we've made it work for two years. Somehow I always make time for my baby-- um... my man. I spend the whole week just living for the weekend, just aching to be in his arms again.

Monday morning and I can't wait until Friday night. It's lunch time and I've just called home to check my messages. I'm surprised to hear his voice. "Just sitting at my desk thinking of you," he said. I had just left his house that morning. Still smelling his cologne on my shirt, I smile and look forward to calling him on the phone this evening. Through the week we talk on the phone almost daily. "Good morning," "Good night." Conversations are short and sweet with occasional sexual overtones. That man knows how to keep me going.

It's Friday. I pack my bags. "Gotta go, see ya, my baby is waiting for me and I must get there on time." I arrive 8 PM on the dot and there on the porch he stands. Thick, handsome and brown, he has a smile that makes me feel blessed to be in his presence. His name is Wilfred, but I call him Shorty. Grinning from ear - to - ear he says, "Hey baby, how was your week?", And, before I can say a word, he kisses me and makes me lose all sense of time and space. We have been seeing each other for two years and things are wonderful. I love spending weekends with my Shorty. Friday evenings with him usually start with dinner, fine wine and good conversation. My baby loves to talk about any and everything. I love to hear him speak...... We wash dinner dishes and retire to his bedroom to relax, snuggle, and unwind. I have not seen my boy all week long and it feels so good to hold him in my arms. The lights are low as we cuddle, kiss and talk about how good it feels to be together again. The radio plays softly. Jazz envelopes us as we dance. As our fully embraced bodies sway and rock to the gentle rhythms, I pull him even closer to me. As my hands glide up and down his back, his body begins speaking to me, showing me what it needs. A sense of calmness comes over him. The look on his face tells me that he needs more than dancing and conversation. His voice is deep, soft and soothing as he whispers how good our bodies feel rubbing against each other. Undressing me as we dance, he guides me closer to the bed. His eyes look as if he is plotting, planning a strategy of some kind. He pulls me closer and I know it is about that time. Making love to this man is no easy task. He is a very demanding, aggressive lover who loves to wrestle in bed. I almost never know what to expect--- and I love him for it.

Thick strong hands grip each of my wrists. As he holds me down his tongue searches my lips, my neck, my chest and all points in between slowly and gently. Goose bumps begin to rise all over my body. My back arches as the stubble of his face rubs against my nipples. I am fully aroused. So aroused that it hurts. He sucks my nipples as he spreads my legs and places my rock

hard dick between his firm, thick, hairy thighs and starts to grind. We fit together in such a way that I can feel the opening of his ass with the head of my dick. Damn it feels good!! One hundred and eighty pounds of force, pumping and grinding like no tomorrow. As he continues to pump, he tightens his sweaty, slick thighs, squeezing my dick with every stroke. My arms held down, my thighs spread wide, his lips and teeth nipping and teasing one nipple and then the other and then the other and then the other....... I think I might lose my mind. With each stroke I become more aware of how good inside of his hairy ass felt as head of my dick continues to rub against his firm, muscular hole. I think to myself....I must have it. Without thought I suddenly say,
" When this fat dick gets in you, you'll know it belongs to you." This excites him even more. His hard dick slides between our sweating bodies, and his foreskin is pulled back exposing sensitive thick round head which has turned red from the friction between us. Still holding my wrists and forearms to keep me in position, he kisses me and begins sucking my tongue. I can tell by the way his body is beginning to jerk. It's about that time. "Emm!", he grunts. Suddenly his dick seems to explode, spewing his cum from my stomach to my face. Finally he releases my arms. I open my eyes, look into his smiling face and say, "boy--you needed that didn't you?" "Ua-Ha" he said still grinning as if he had opened a new toy at Christmas that he can't wait to play with. We both laugh as we wipe his "explosion" from our bodies and faces. "You didn't cum?", He asks, looking puzzled and concerned. "Oh I will--I've got plans for you little man." I replied, contemplating which way I was going to fuck him this time. He sees the look in my eyes and seems reassured that all is well.

As I sit here wiping off, I look at him and I am amazed that such a gentle man contains so much passion. I say jokingly, " You know, you one a dem intensified kinda boys, ain't ya." We both laugh, fall into each others arms, and rest before round two. He puts his head on my chest and snuggles up to me like a small child sleeping on his father. I cradle him in my arms, rub his bald head and hum him to sleep. As he slumbers in my arms, heavy breathing is only interrupted by a snuggle as he tries to pull me even closer to him. These are the times that I feel closest to him. It's moments like these that I cherish the most.

The sound of running water awakens me. "Shorty," I call out in a sleepy, lazy voice, "Shorty, why are you up so damn early?" It is Saturday morning and there is no telling what this man has planed. We may end up at the museum, at some friend's house playing cards, or whatever, it was all good. I enjoy our Saturday outings and look forward to whatever the day may hold.

I jump into the shower behind him. Sometimes I forget how beautiful this man is. Watching the soapy water flow slowly down the back of his neck and between his shoulder blades, I start to become aroused. As I watch this white foamy trail of soap travel down the center of his back to his round firm ass, my body reminds me that it has a need that must be met. My man has the perfect ass. He feels my piece at the base of his back and says, "Don't get me started, we have a lot to do. Gone now." I pull him closer to me and begin licking the soap from his ears, his neck, and his shoulders, as I work my way down. "Stop now!" trying to sound like he means it. By this time I am on my knees. The water runs down my face as my hands spread his cheeks and

my tongue searches for that smooth place where pleasure is found. I take my time. Making sure that all areas are covered, that every hair has had equal attention, I begin to rub his balls and push my tongue deep inside him, again and again. I stop suddenly. "What?", he says. " Remember. We have a lot to do today.", I reply, as I look at his rock hard dick. He looks pissed.

We finish showering and get ready to indulge in our Saturday activities. Throughout the course of the day I notice that he was erect several times. Each time he has an erection he gives me that plotting, planing look again. Finally we are at our last stop for the day. As we stand in the checkout line I whisper in his ear, "I didn't upset you this morning did I?" "Louie, you know you wrong. My shit's been hard all day thinking about that shit.", he laughs. " You know that shit makes me crazy." The cashier looks puzzled as we both laugh out loud, " It's about that time!!" We are such a silly couple. Our friends all say that we look like brothers and act more like best friends than lovers.

We pull up into the drive way and begin unloading. Groceries, clothes, a lawn chair, and other various bags of whatever, Shorty lives to shop. I finish unloading the truck and he starts dinner. It looks like it is going to be a quiet evening at home. I smile as I wonder what this evening will unfold. We dine on collard greens, baked pork chops, and potato salad. He has eaten too much and his stomach is killing him. As we watch television , he puts his feet in my lap. I laugh and say, "No one told you to eat all that shit man." "But, it was so good." he whines in a pitiful voice, like a child being punished. I begin rubbing his stomach to comfort him. As he drifts off to sleep he whispers, "I love you Louie--You know that, don't you?" "Yes baby" I reply, "I love you too." By this time it's 9 PM. and we both lie napping on the couch.

Half asleep I feel his lips tickling the palms of my hands. That's his way of waking me up. He begins kissing his way up my thighs and starts to nuzzle my balls. It's my *guess* that he's feeling a little better. "Let's take it to the room." , he growls in low voice. I respond in a playful, yo homie voice," I'ma take des shit to da hole Shorty. I'ma represent all up in that," "Alright daddy, you better come correct." he laughs as he walk toward the bedroom, undressing. He likes it when I talk rough to him. Even though he's a very masculine man, he l loves it when I take control. He loves it when I--take it. Continuing our game, I give him a threatening look and say in a deep, demanding voice "You gone gimmie that ass ro I'ma have to take it!"

Both of us stand at the foot of the bed naked and excited. He gives me a twisted look and says," Alright homie, take it, if you think you can." I push him down on to the bed and it's on. We roll and wrestle around and around, kissing, sucking, licking and biting. It is a mess. He looks up at me in a way that says fuck me now. Enjoying this sex game, I flip him over and start to grind. I suck the back of his neck and shoulders as my fingers search for that smooth place that sends chills through his body. "Eumm-shit," he grunts in a whispers. By now I have two of my fingers inside of him. " Damn that hole feels right! I've got to go up in it! You gone gimmie that ass muther fucka, hua, you gone gimmie that good ass.", my voice getting louder and rougher with each statement. He whispers desperately-- impatiently, "Yes Louie, I've been wanting you all day long", "I've been waiting for this all week." Knowing that he likes it rough, I snatch him

by his ankles to the foot of the bed and set him up on his knees, "Doggy Style". I couldn't see his face, but I could tell that it caught him of guard. I guess he forgets just how much "Homie" I can be. I think to myself (Don't tense up now, the fun has just begun). I drop to one knee and start liking his balls and working my way up. As my tongue works its way to the center of his soul, Shorty's body begins to tremble. "Oh shit" he sighs. "Damn you got me crazy". While I continue licking and tasting his most sensitive area, I slip on my condom. It is time. I stand behind him and rub his back as I begin a slow, but steady entry. His ass feels tight around the head of my dick. "Auh" Shorty whimpers. I pause , then continue. Slowly, I work my way in to that tight wet place I call heaven on earth, Shorty's ass. Shorty's ass is so good that it's worth writing songs about. On his elbows and knees he begins to rock with me as his body relaxes and opens up. All I want to do is ride and ride and ride. "Yea Louie, get it, take that ass!" He commands. It is on. The more I pump the more he seems to want. It is as if we are running a race and the who ever cums first is the loser. His body becomes tight and tense letting me know that he needs to release. He spreads his thighs even further apart and starts to jack his dick. As his ass hole tightens, I drop low and pump as hard, fast and deep as I can. Damn this ass is good!! He brings out all of the greedy dog that I have in me.

"Eummm shit!!" he roars. As sweat roles down my body , I ask, "Is it good Shorty, is this dick good to you?". "Yes baby--oh God yes, shit!", he shouted, as he jacks his dick with one hand and griped the sheets with the other. " Come on Shorty, come on Shorty !" I shouted again and again. My dick feels harder than it has ever been, as it slides in and out of that place my body has become so addicted to. My hand cracks like a whip against his sweaty ass. With each smack Shorty and I come closer and closer to losing the race in this twisted sex game that we both love so much. All at once, "Auh!!" He pushes his face into the bed, groaning. For a moment I black out and have no sense of where I am. A high like no drug could ever produce. I almost lose my balance. I regain consciousness only to realize that we both lost the race. I collapse on top of him. Sweaty and exhausted we lie there ginning, laughing, and gasping for air. As we try to catch our breath, we kiss and hold one another. As I lie on top of him and his arms surround me. Still grinning, I look in to his eyes taste his lips, tell him how much I love him. I place my head in the center of his chest and the rhythm of his breathing slowly rocks me to sleep. Feeling loved and cherished, I listen to his heart beat and it becomes my lullaby. I don't ever remember anyone making me feel this good.

I love Sundays. It's the most peaceful day of the week. I wake up and Shorty is still fast asleep. Trying not to awaken him I slip out of bed and go in to the kitchen to start breakfast. A glance at the mirror, shows me Shorty's reflection, as he rolls over and snuggles up to the warm pillow on my side of the bed. I pause to see if he is awake. He takes one deep breath and drifts back to sleep. The house is completely silent as I stand entertaining the idea of having him just one more time, before I leave this afternoon. After two such wonderful days, it's hard to think about leaving his place and returning to the real world. Continuing my journey to the kitchen, I notice how impeccably neat this man is. His little size eight shoes are lined up next to the hall closet. His CDs are alphabetized and line both side of his entertainment center. Every thing that this man does he does immaculately--- I mean every thing. I walk in to the kitchen, swing open

the refrigerator door and decide what my baby might like to eat.
Sunday breakfast or brunch in this case, has always been my official duty. Pouring myself a glass of water, I ponder, "Omelets? Salmon Croquettes and home fries? What would be good this week?" As I continue mumbling to myself, a yawning voice pleads , "Pancakes!" Startled, I turn around, " How long have you been standing there?", I ask, as he stands there buck naked. "Long enough to hear you talking to yourself. They have pills for that kinda thing , you know." He laughs. Before he can duck or run , I douse him with the ice cold glass water. "Uah!!", he shrieks. Unable to speak, he stands there with his mouth wide open. His goose bump covered body seems frozen in place. " Good morning Wilfred," I stand there smiling and ready for combat. He turns slowly, " I'm gone get you-- I'm gonna get you good. These pancakes better be damn good." he grumbles as he walks away. "Oh yes sir Mr. Shorty, dis here johnny cakes gone be sho-nuff special." I say in a loud, plantation Negro voice.

While Shorty takes his shower, I cook homemade buttermilk pancakes, smoked ham, and scrambled eggs with cheese. "Surely he will forgive me now." I try to convince myself as I look over my shoulder. I hear him coming down the hallway, as I set the table. "Uhm- that smells good!" he says as he walks into the kitchen. He took one look at that table and all was forgiven. We both love a good , old fashioned, country breakfast. He looks up at me and asks, "Where are the home fries?" As I fix his plate, I say, "A man your age shouldn't think about eating home fries and pancakes in the same week, and you want them in the same plate." He is only five years older then me, but I make the *most* of it. He frowns, and then smirks as we both sit down to eat.

Still full from that big meal, I realize how late in the day it is. "1:30 already." I start heading down the hallway. I just remembered, my best friend is coming to town and I'm supposed to meet him at the airport at 2:45 PM. "Where are you going Louie?", He asks. "Oh, to the air port."He answers himself. I finish showering and come out of the bathroom only to find that Shorty had packed my over night bag for me. "Here you go baby. I'll warm up the car while you get dressed." he says, as he double checks the zippers on the bag. Before he can get out of the room, I grab him from behind. " There you go, you wait until you know we can't do nothing and then get me started." he laughs. We kiss for a moment. "Uhm-let me go now, you will never blame me if you're late." he says, pushing me away. His piece is down his leg already. Both of us laugh as I start getting dressed and he heads out to the car.

Fully dressed, I scan the room for anything that I can't live with out until next weekend. Shorty meets me at the front door. Concerned I ask, "Your not going with me?" " No Louie. It's your best friend and you haven't seen or even spoken to him in over six month. You guys need some time alone and I have some papers to grade." he says in an insistent voice. Convinced by his argument, I pull him close and give him one last kiss, before making my journey. As I turn and walk to the car, I noticed the old lady , who lives next door. She is peering through her window. "Lord --doesn't she have a life?" I ask, as I wave at the homophobic old prude. I bet she has some stories to tell the church mothers when she goes back for this evenings service. Shorty watches me as I get in the car. You would think I was moving to some far away place, by the look on his face. A honk of my horn and I'm on my way.

Driving to the airport, I notice that my bag seems stuffed. I know I didn't pack that much. Still driving, I can't stop glancing at it. What the hell is in this bag? "Oh Shit!!" Think back on that cold glass of ice water that I splashed on Shorty this morning. He seemed so forgiving. But was he? "I Knew he was going to get me", I say out loud as unzipping the bag and ramble through it with one hand. Keeping my eye on the road feel something damp, sticky and fury. Completely grossed out, by this nasty feeling, I snatch this thing out of my bag. Lets see what Shorty has left for me. I stared at it in disbelief. It's a brown Teddy bear in a white T-shirt, black denim vest and matching leather cap. The top had come off of my lotion bottle and the lotion soaked one of its arms. Laughing at myself for being so paranoid and realize just how sweet a man Shorty really is. Holding this "Biker Bear" in my lap, I smile and press on to the airport. I cant wait until next weekend.

WEEKENDS

By Marco Sanders
7/1/97

Thinking about the things that make him special, the things I value most are his honesty, his compassion and most of all his sense of humor. Five foot and seven inch tall, one hundred and eighty pounds, and solid as a rock, he looks more like a truck driver than a schoolteacher. He is a quick wit with a very sharp tongue. If you come for him, you better be ready. We are both very busy people with demanding careers and hectic schedules, but somehow we've made it work for two years. Somehow I always make time for my man. I spend the whole week just living for the weekend, just aching to be in his arms again. Sometimes I wish I could spend more time with him. I'd like to see him more than just weekends and evenings here and there. Other times I feel fortunate to have my space. For now things are cool the way they are. The times we spend together always make up for the times that we are apart.

It's Monday and I can't wait until Friday night. I've just called home to check my messages. It's lunchtime and I'm surprised to hear his voice on the machine. "Just sitting at my desk thinking of you," he said. I had just left his house this morning. Still smelling his cologne on my shirt, I smile and look forward to calling him on the phone this evening. Through the week we talk on the phone almost daily. "Good morning," "Good night." Conversations are short and sweet with occasional sexual overtones. That man knows how to keep me going.

It's Friday. I pack my bags. "Gotta go, see ya, my baby is waiting for me and I must get there on time." I arrive 8 PM on the dot and there on the porch he stands. Thick, handsome and brown, he has a smile that makes me feel blessed to be in his presence. His name is Wilfred, but I call him Shorty. Grinning from ear - to - ear he says, "Hey baby, how was your week?" And, before I can say a word, he kisses me and makes me lose all sense of time and space. We have been seeing each other for two years and things are wonderful. I love spending weekends with my Shorty. Friday evenings with him usually start with dinner, fine wine and good conversation. My baby loves to talk about any and everything. I love to hear him speak... We wash dinner dishes and retire to his bedroom to relax, snuggle, and unwind.

I have not seen my boy all week long and it feels so good to hold him in my arms. The lights are low as we cuddle on the large, black, crush velvet throw pillows that line the floor beneath bay window of his master suite. We kiss and talk about how good it feels to be together again. The radio plays softly. I stand, reach for his hand and pull him up into my arms. As our fully embraced bodies sway and rock to the gentle rhythms, I hold him even closer to me. Jazz envelops us as we dance. As my hands glide up and down his back, his body begins speaking to me, showing me what it needs. A sense of calmness comes over him. The look on his face tells me that he needs more than dancing and conversation. His voice is deep, soft and soothing as he whispers how good our bodies feel rubbing against each other. Undressing me as we dance, he guides me closer to the bed. His eyes look as if he is plotting, planning a strategy of some kind. He pulls me

closer and I know it is about that time. I lie down and smile with anticipation. Making love to this man is no easy task. He is a very demanding, aggressive lover who loves to wrestle in bed. I almost never know what to expect--- and I love him for it.

Thick strong hands grip each of my wrists. As he holds me down his tongue searches my lips, my neck, my chest and all points in between slowly and gently. Goose bumps begin to rise all over my body. My back arches as the stubble of his face rubs against my nipples. I am fully aroused. So aroused that it hurts. He sucks my nipples as he spreads my legs and places my rock hard dick between his firm, thick, hairy thighs and starts to grind. We fit together in such a way that I can feel the opening of his ass with the head of my dick. Damn it feels good!! One hundred and eighty pounds of force, pumping and grinding like no tomorrow. As he continues to pump, he tightens his sweaty, slick thighs, squeezing my dick with every stroke. My arms held down, my thighs spread wide, his lips and teeth nipping and teasing one nipple and then the other and then the other and then the other... I think I might lose my mind. With each stroke I become more aware of how good the inside of his hairy ass feels as the head of my dick continues to rub against his firm, muscular hole. I think to myself.... *I must have it!*

Without thought I suddenly say, " When this fat dick gets in your ass, you'll know it belongs to me." This excites him even more. His hard dick slides between our sweating bodies, and his foreskin is pulled back exposing sensitive thick round head which has turned red from the friction between us. Still holding my wrists and forearms to keep me in position, he kisses me and begins sucking my tongue. I can tell by the way that his body is beginning to jerk. It's about that time. "Emm!", he grunts. Suddenly his dick seems to explode, spewing his cum from my stomach to my face. Finally he releases my arms. I open my eyes, look into his smiling face and say, "boy--you needed that didn't you?" "Ua-Ha" he said still grinning as if he had opened a new toy at Christmas that he can't wait to play with. We both laugh as we wipe his "explosion" from our bodies and faces. "You didn't cum?", He asks, looking puzzled and concerned. "Oh I will. I've got plans for you little man." I replied, contemplating which way I was going to fuck him this time. He sees the look in my eyes and seems reassured that all is well.

As I sit here wiping off, I look at him and I am amazed that such a gentle man contains so much passion. I say jokingly, "You know, you one a dem intensified kinda boys, ain't ya." We both laugh, fall into each other's arms, and rest before round two. He puts his head on my chest and snuggles up to me like a small child sleeping on his father. I cradle him in my arms, rub his smooth, bald head and hum him to sleep. He slumbers in my arms. His heavy breathing is only interrupted by his snuggle, as he tries to pull me even closer to him These are the times that I feel closest to him. It's moments like these that I cherish the most.

The sound of running water awakens me. "Shorty," I call out in a sleepy, lazy voice, "Shorty, why are you up so damn early?" It is Saturday morning and there is no telling what this man has planed. We may end up at the museum or at some friend's house playing cards, or whatever it was all-good. I enjoy our Saturday outings and look forward to whatever the day may hold.

I jump into the shower behind him. Sometimes I forget how beautiful this man is. Watching the soapy water flow slowly down the back of his neck and between his shoulder blades, I start to become aroused. As I watch this white foamy trail of soap travel down the center of his back to his round firm ass, my body reminds me that it has a need that must be met. My man has the perfect ass. He feels my piece at the base of his back, and says, "Don't get me started, we have a lot to do today. G'on now." I pull him closer to me and begin licking the soap from his ears, his neck, and his shoulders, as I work my way down. "Stop now!", trying to sound like he means it. By this time I am on my knees. The water runs down my face as my hands spread his cheeks and my tongue searches for that smooth place where pleasure is found. I take my time. Making sure that all areas are covered, that every hair has had equal attention, I begin to rub his balls and push my tongue deep inside him, again and again. I stop suddenly. "What?", he says. " Remember. We have a lot to do today." I reply, as I look at his rock hard dick. He looks pissed.

We finish showering and get ready to indulge in our Saturday activities. Throughout the course of the day I notice that he was erect several times. Each time he has an erection he gives me that plotting, planing look again. Finally we are at our last stop for the day. As we stand in the checkout line I whisper in his ear, "I didn't upset you this morning did I?" "Louie, you know you wrong. My shit's been hard all day thinking about that shit.", he laughs. " You know that shit makes me crazy." The cashier looks puzzled as we both laugh out loud, " It's about that time!" We are such a silly couple. Our friends all say that we look like brothers and act more like best friends than lovers.

We pull up into the driveway and begin unloading. Groceries, clothes, a lawn chair, and other various bags of whatever, Shorty lives to shop. I finish unloading the truck and he starts dinner. It looks like it is going to be a quiet evening at home. I smile as I wonder what this evening will unfold. We dine on collard greens, baked pork chops, and potato salad. He has eaten too much and his stomach is killing him. As we watch television, he puts his feet in my lap. I laugh and say, "No one told you to eat all that shit man." "But, it was so good." he whines in a pitiful voice, like a child being punished. I begin rubbing his stomach to comfort him. As he drifts off to sleep he whispers, "I love you Louie--You know that, don't you?" I reply, "Yes baby. I love you too." By this time it's 9 PM. and we both lie napping on the couch.

Half asleep I feel his lips kissing the palm of my hand. The feel of his tongue, lips and mustache on my hands and fingertips gives me an instant erection. That's his way of waking me up. He begins kissing his way up my thighs and starts to nuzzle my balls. It's my *guess* that he's feeling a little better. "Let's take it to the room." he growls in low voice. I respond in a playful, yo homie voice," I'ma take dis' shit to da hole Shorty. I'ma represent all up in that," "Alright daddy, you better come correct." he laughs as he walk toward the bedroom, undressing. He likes it when I talk rough to him. Even though he's a very masculine man, he loves it when I take control. He loves it when I--take it. Continuing our game, I give him a threatening look and say in a deep, demanding voice "You gone gimmie that ass or I'ma have to take it!"

Both of us stand beside the king-size bed naked and excited. He gives me a twisted look and says, "Alright homie, take it, if you think you can." I push him down on to the bed and it's on. We roll and wrestle around and around on the black velvet comforter and cream satin sheets, kissing, sucking, licking. He grabs the wrought iron headboard with both hands and holds it tight as I suck and bit his chest and nipples. There is something about the taste of is skin and the smell of his sweat that makes me crazy. It is a mess. He looks up at me in a way that says fuck me now. Enjoying this sex game, I flip him over onto his stomach and start to grind. I suck the back of his neck and shoulders as my fingers search for that smooth place that sends chills through his body. "Eumm-shit," he grunts in a whisper. By now I have pushed two of my fingers deep inside of him. As I slowly slide my fingers in and out of him, his body begins to jerk and grind. The feel of his warm, wet, tight ass surrounding my fingers gets me even more exited. My voice moans deeply, "Damn that hole feels right! I've got to go up in it! My voice groaning rougher and more threatening with each word, I tell him slowly, "You g'on gimmie that ass muther fucka, hua, you gone gimmie that good ass." He whispers desperately -- impatiently, "Louie, I've been wanting you all day. Damn I want you!"

Knowing that he likes to play rough, I snatch him by his ankles to the side of the bed and set him up on his knees, "Doggy Style". I couldn't see his face, but I could tell that it caught him of guard. I guess he forgets just how much "Homie" I can be. I think to myself, *"Don't tense up now. The fun has just begun."* The smell of his sweaty body makes my mouth water. It makes me want to lick every inch of his velvety chocolate skin. I drop to one knee and start liking his balls and working my way up. As my tongue works its way to the center of his soul, Shorty's body begins to tremble. He sighs, "Oh shit. Uah-ha. Damn you got me crazy." While I continue licking and tasting his most sensitive area, I slip on my condom. It is time. I stand behind him and rub his back as I begin a slow, but steady entry. His ass feels tight around the head of my dick. "Ah!" Shorty whimpers. I pause, then continue. Slowly, I work my way in to that tight wet place I call heaven on earth, Shorty's ass. Shorty's ass is so good that it's worth writing songs about. On his elbows and knees he begins to rock with me as his body relaxes and opens up. All I want to do is ride and ride and ride. "Yea Louie, get it! Shit, take that ass!" He commands. It's on! The more I pump the more he seems to want. It is as if we are running a race and whoever cums first is the loser. His body becomes tight and tense, which lets me know that he needs to release. He spreads his thighs even further apart and starts to jack his dick. As his ass hole tightens, I drop low and pump as hard, fast and deep as I can. Damn this ass is good! He brings out the greedy dog in me.

"Eummm shit!!" he roars. As sweat roles down my body, I ask, "Is it good Shorty, is this dick good to you?" He moans, "Uh -ha — oh, God yes. Shit!" as he jacks his dick with one hand and grips the satin sheets with the other. " Come on Shorty, come on Shorty!" I shouted again and again. My dick feels harder than it has ever been, as it slides in and out of that place my body has become so addicted to. My hand cracks like a whip against his sweaty ass. With each smack Shorty and I come closer and closer to losing the race in this twisted sex game that we both love so much. All at once, "Ah!" He pushes his face into the bed, groaning. For a moment I black out and have no sense of where I am. A high like no drug could ever produce. I almost lose my balance. I regain

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I love Sundays. It's the most peaceful day of the week. I wake up and Shorty is still fast asleep. Trying not to awaken him I slip out of bed and start toward the kitchen to start breakfast. A glance at the mirror shows me Shorty's reflection, as he rolls over and snuggles up to the warm pillow on my side of the bed. I pause to see if he is awake. He takes one deep breath and drifts back to sleep. His thick body seems to be submerged in the cream and black, satin and velvet bed coverings that surround him. His entire bedroom is cream and black. It is color coordinated down to the finest detail.

The walls and carpet of this large room are a rich, creamy French vanilla color. The window trim, ceiling and doors are pure white. At the head of his bed there is a swirling mass of black wrought iron. Its' branch like, rolling curls reach like vines from one side of his king-sized bed to the other. It seems dark and foreboding. More like a gate than a headboard, it is the centerpiece of his bedroom. At the foot of his bed there are two large chests made of ebony with black wrought iron trim. They are draped in Adinkra cloth imported from Ghana. Three large bronze, column like, antique candlesticks sit on top of small, round table in the corner of the room near the bay window. Each of them a different height and topped with black candles. A huge, ebony framed, full-length mirror that must be a least four feet wide dominates the wall that faces the foot of his bed. There is a black bookshelf in the space between his closet and bathroom doors. On it is a mixture of African and West Indian statues and other souvenirs. There are several books on African and West Indian culture located on the bookshelf as well. The other walls are adorned with African masks and small Afro-centric prints. A huge, cream and black, zebra print area rug lies at the base of the bay window and extends across the length of the room past the foot of his bed to the bedrooms' entrance. Accent pillows of varying types of cheetah and tiger prints can be found on his bed and at the base of the bay window.

My favorite spot in his bedroom is the huge bay window. It is almost like a room on to itself. Its inner ledge is nearly wide enough to sit on and low enough to lean on if you were sitting on the floor. Lined with large, over-stuffed, black velvet pillows, the bay window provides a view of the lake that is breath taking. The huge window faces South and even though you can not see the sun rise or set; it provides natural light through out the day. It is a very peaceful and romantic area, especially at sunset. The view of the lake is only interrupted by two wrought iron candlesticks topped with white candles. They sit on either side of a large crystal vase of one dozen or so white orchids. It was in this window; on these velvet pillows; in front of this magnificent, view that Shorty and I made love for the first time. It was that evening that I began to fall in love with him. I

stand here smiling and gazing at that window and those pillows and think back on that night.

The house is completely silent as I stand entertaining the idea of having him just one more time, before I leave this afternoon. After two such wonderful days, it's hard to think about leaving his place and returning to the real world. I turn and continue my journey to the kitchen. I notice how impeccably neat this man is. His little size eight shoes are lined up next to the hall closet. Hundreds of alphabetized CDs line both side of his entertainment center. The hardwood floors of his hall and living room shine as though they have never been walked on. Everything that this man does he does immaculately — I mean everything. I walk in to the kitchen, swing open the refrigerator door and decide what my baby might like to eat.

Sunday breakfast or brunch in this case, has always been my official duty. Pouring myself a glass of water, I ponder, "Omelets? Salmon Croquettes and Home fries? What would be good this week?" As I continue mumbling to myself, a yawning voice pleads, "Pancakes!" Startled, I turn around, " How long have you been standing there?" I ask, as he stands there buck-naked. "Long enough to hear you talking to yourself. They have pills for that kinda thing, you know." He laughs. Before he can duck or run, I douse him with the ice cold glass water. "Uah!!", he shrieks. Unable to speak, he stands there with his mouth wide open. His goose bump covered body seems frozen in place. " Good morning Wilfred," I stand there smiling and ready for combat. He turns slowly, " I'm g'on get you — I'm gonna get you good. These pancakes better be damn good." he grumbles as he walks away. I say in a loud, plantation Negro voice. "Oh yes Sir Mr. Shorty, dis here Johnny cakes g'on be sho-nuff special."

While Shorty takes his shower, I cook homemade buttermilk pancakes, smoked ham, and scrambled eggs with cheese. "Surely he will forgive me now." I try to convince myself as I look over my shoulder. I hear him coming down the hallway, as I set the table. "Um- that smells good!" he says as he walks into the kitchen. He takes one look at that table and all is forgiven. We both love good, old fashioned, country breakfast. He looks up at me and asks, "Where are the home fries?" As I fix his plate, I say, "A man your age shouldn't think about eating home fries and pancakes in the same week, and you want them in the same plate." He is only five years older then me, but I make the *most* of it. He frowns, and then smirks as we both sit down to eat. Shorty asks, "Baby why were you watching me sleep? Not that it bothered me, but you seemed concerned about something." I pause for a moment, smile and say, "You know, your room... in fact your entire home is like a museum. Other than your kitchen and your office, none of it looks lived in." We both laugh. He replies, "Well, everything must have its' place. I guess it comes from all those years in the army." I say, "Shit. Don't blame them for your crazy ass ways. You and that gate to hell you call a headboard." We both laugh again.

Shorty pauses and gets a concerned look on his face and asks, "Is that all that's on your mind?" I reply, "Things are cool. I just wonder where we are headed sometimes. You know, with each other." He smiles and says, "Things are alright. I ain't goin' no where."

I say, "It's not anything bad, but it seems like we aren't moving forward, you know. Have you given any more thought to our living together or at least seeing each other more often?" Shorty smiles and says, "What's the rush. Let's enjoy what we have. Many people don't make it last as long as we have. I know we have talked before about living together and making a deeper commitment, but I stay so busy with work and my other activities that … Well… You are the only man in my life Louie." He smiles as he nervously starts clearing the table and continues, "Things are great for us now so lets not stress ourselves out about the future too much. Okay?"

I think to myself fore a moment, *"Well he does have a point. Maybe moving in together would be a big mistake."* I smile and say, "Maybe your right, but a part of me wants to wake up to you every morning and hold you every night. We have been keeping it light for two years now and it is nice, but... If living together concerns you that much then we don't have to deal with that right now. We both require a lot space and maybe that's why it works for us." I smile and kiss him. He looks concerned. I think that he can tell, my needs are changing. Keeping things light and casual was nice in the beginning, but what we have has been so good for so long that I have a hard time understanding why he does not want to go to the next level. We have keys to each other homes and cars so I feel committed, but it also feels like something is missing. It seems incomplete. As he washes the dishes I stand behind him and hug him to reassure him that things are okay.

Still full from that big meal, I realize how late in the day it is. "1:30 already." I start heading down the hallway. I just remembered my best friend is coming to town and I'm supposed to meet him at the airport at 2:45 PM. "Where are you going Louie?" He asks. "Oh, to the air port." He answers himself. I finish showering and come out of the bathroom only to find that Shorty had packed my over night bag for me. "Here you go baby. I'll warm up the car while you get dressed." He says, as he double checks the zippers on the bag. Before he can get out of the room, I grab him from behind. " There you go. Man you wait until you know we can't do nothin' and then get me started." he laughs. We kiss for a moment. "Uhm-let me go now, you will never blame me if you're late." he says, pushing me away. His piece is down his leg already. Both of us laugh as I start getting dressed and he heads out to the car.

Fully dressed, I scan the room for anything that I can't live with out until next weekend. Shorty meets me at the front door. Concerned I ask, "You're not going with me?" " No Louie. It's your best friend and you haven't seen or even spoken to him in over six month. You guys need some time alone and I have some papers to grade." he says in an insistent voice. Convinced by his argument, I pull him close and give him one last kiss, before making my journey. As I turn and walk to the car, I noticed the old lady, who lives next door. She is peering through her window. "Lord --doesn't she have a life?" I ask, as I wave at the homophobic old prude. I bet she has some stories to tell the church mothers when she goes back for this evenings service. Shorty watches me as I get in the car. You would think I was moving to some far away place, by the look on his face. A honk of my horn and I'm on my way.

Shorty watches the car pull off and starts thinking about the nature of his relationship with Louie. Though he hates to admit it, the house feels cold and empty with out Louie's laughter. He thinks to himself, "*Why can't I open up? Why is it so hard to take that next step? I don't see anyone else. I don't want to.*" Shorty wonders through that house and thinks back on how good it was in his previous relationship. The man that Shorty loved and remodeled this house with died of AIDS over five years ago. Louie was the only man that Shorty had taken seriously since that time. Shorty ponders, *"Louie has been more than patient. I know he loves me and it could be cool, but I just can't seem to get ready?"* He walks from room to room and for the first time he realizes that his house is nothing more that a shrine for his dead lover. All of the books and art and music that fill the house were testaments to a man that he would never see again. He finds him self at the bay window of his bedroom. Torn between guilt and fear, he sits on the ledge of that window and cradles one of the pillows in his arms as he stares off into the distance. He is afraid that he will lose Louie yet he is unable to love him completely. *"Why do I fill so guilty for loving him? Why can't I move forward? I know my ex-lover... my dead lover would want me to be happy. He would not want me to be alone."* Tears roll down his face as he sits and stares out of that window. Shorty knows in his heart that he has to make a decision soon.

Relationships
For Better or Worst

While driving to the airport, Louie glances over at his bag and notices that it seems stuffed.

I know I didn't pack that much. Still driving, I can't stop glancing at it. What the hell is in this bag? "Oh Shit!!" I think back on that cold glass of ice water that I splashed on Shorty this morning. He seemed so forgiving. But was he? "I Knew he was going to get me", I say out loud as I unzip the bag and ramble through it with one hand. Keeping my eye's on the road feel something damp, sticky and fury. Completely grossed out, by this nasty feeling, I snatch this thing out of my bag. Let's see what Shorty has left for me. I stared at it in disbelief. It's a brown Teddy bear in a white T-shirt, black denim vest and matching leather cap. The top had come off of my lotion bottle and the lotion soaked one of its arms. Laughing at myself for being so paranoid and realize just how sweet a man Shorty really is. Holding this "Biker Bear" in my lap, I smile and press on to the airport.

I make my journey through Hartsfield Airport to the gate where Max will be arriving. Siting here at the airport, I look at people and notice how they relate to each other. Hugs hello, kisses goodbye, friends, lovers and family members wait for their loved ones to arrive. I sit and wait for Max to arrive from Denver and think about how we all relate to each other. How lives intersect and effect one another. I don't think anyone fully realizes the effect that day to day life interactions have on other peoples lives.

I notice a Black couple sitting directly across from me. I know that these two guys are lovers, because we run in some of the same circles and have mutual acquaintances. I forget what their names are, but I have always thought that they were such a good-looking couple. They seem so content with one another. Watching them talk to each other with soft words and warm looks, I wonder if Shorty and I look that happy when we are together. Suddenly one of them sees me and says, "Hay boy, what's up", and motions for me to come over and sit with them. As I walk over I try my damnedest to remember at least one of their names. Embarrassed I say, "What's up fellas!" We greet each other with hand shacks and hugs, sit down and begin to talk.

"What are your names again." I say chuckling. "Louie you been to my house too many times not to know my name, but at least you are real enough not to try and play it off. I'm Marty and this is Steve. See, me Marty — he Steve." He says with evil sarcasm. We all laugh. I notice again Marty's fair skin and shoulder length, reddish-brown hair. He looks like a woman from a distance, not that he tries to, but he is just one of those men that are so thin and so pretty — he just has it like that. One of the things I admire about Marty is that his femininity is so natural. He's not one of those, "kee-kee" types, you know, that are always saying, "Yeah girl!" and "Oh Miss thang!" but he is quite a character and he's always real. Steve is very reserved. Always friendly and warm, but never has very much to say. Steve is brown skinned with green eyes and jet-black dreads. I *guess* you could call him the strong silent type, but for some reason Steve loves to talk to me. Steve asks, "Louie, why did you cut off your dreads man?" I explain. "They were getting to long and staring to get, you know — it was just time for a change." Marty says," Um-hum, that little man made you cut them off. Didn't he? Don't lie!." We all start laughing again. Marty and Steve are such a fun pair. "What's his name again." Steve Asks. "His name is Wilfred, but everyone calls him Shorty," I reply.

Marty gives Steve a strange look. I never gave it much thought before, but other friends have told me that Steve does not talk to very many people and seems to hate all of Marty's friends. Marty says looking surprised. "I seem to have *some* friends you like Steve." I could not tell if he was jealous or just surprised that Steve was so cool with me. Just then they announced Flight 775 was boarding. They both stand and begin gathering up bags and cups from something they had eaten while waiting on the flight. Marty says, "Well child, its time for me to hit it. I've got to go. Steve, before you go back to the house be sure to give Louie our new number." "Okay baby, have a safe trip," Steve replies. We watch him in line until he boards the plane. Marty turns one last time, blows us a kiss and he is on his way. I love a grand exit.

They announce that there is some kind of delay on all flights from Denver and Flight 668, Max's flight, is going to be an hour late. "Shit." I say impatiently. "What's up, who you waiting on?" Steve asks. "Max, and his flight is going to be late.", I say looking pissed. "Here is our number." Steve says, handing me a business card with their home number written on the back. "Give us a call. Maybe we can do dinner or play cards or something." "Thanks." I say rather dryly. "I'm sorry, I do appreciate your number, I just hate sitting in airports, you know?" He sighs with a sad smile, "Yea, I know Marty travels so much with his job that the airport seems more like home then our house does.

Tell you what, lets have a drink and I'll wait with you until Max's flight gets hear. I know what it's like to sit in an airport alone." Glad that he made the offer we start walking toward the lounge.

We sit down at the corner of bar and order drinks. He orders a Coke. I order a Long Island Iced Tea. "Damn dude, you really wanted a drink didn't you." He says looking at me with a big smile. I tell him, "Well, you know I have not seen my best buddy in a whole year and man — I need to be ready." I say laughing as I pull off my shades and place them in my shirt pocket. " I've known Max for years. We met in high school and became friends when we met again here in Atlanta. We were even roommates for a time. Two years ago he got involved with this guy and things didn't work out so he decided that he needed some time away." Steve says looking puzzled "A whole fuckin' year. That must have been one rough ride." "It was." I reply, wanting to explain with out telling too much of Max's business, I explain hesitantly, "He just thinks more with his heart than his head and this time he paid a high price for it." By this time the drinks were served and I felt the need to change topics.

Sensing that I was uncomfortable talking about Max's drama, Steve changes the subject. "Well what do you do for a living." I tell him, "Well, I'm a office manager at a law firm. When I had those long dreads, I was still working in the mail room and working on my masters in education." I say, grinning at the surprised look on his face. Steve asks, "Is that why you cut your dreads?" "Well not really." I explain, "My boss is a very liberal lesbian. She was rather disappointed when I cut them off. She and I would hang out from time to time and , you know, I'd ware bandannas, jeans, and combat boots almost everywhere. Back then my dreads had grown down to my shoulders. I just decided that I needed a change. You know how it is when you have done something for a long time and you wake up one day and feel that need for something different. You know a fresh outlook." Grinning, with a twinkle in his eye, Steve says, "Um-hum — something strange." Not expecting that kind of response, I smile and look down at the bar. We both laugh and by now I'm beginning to feel my cocktail.

Looking at his green eyes peering through those well groomed, black dreads of his was starting to make my mind wonder. I started seeing him in a way that had not occurred to me before. I ask, "So what do you do exactly?" "What do you mean?" he asks in such a way that I begin to get nervous. Sitting back in my stool I say, "I remember you mentioned something about being a designer." "Yeah, you have a good memory. I manage a furniture store, but I do interior design on the side. I working toward opening my own design firm.", He says before taking the last sip of his Coke. As he grips his drinking glass, I notice how long and thick his fingers are. He has beautiful hands. The way his full lips envelop the rime of his glass as he drinks his Coke *moves* me. While still gazing at his hands, I say, "Um — brains and beauty, I see Marty has his hands quite full." Steve smiles boyishly and says, "He's not filling his hands nearly as often as I would like him to." He pauses, and begins gently stroking both sides of the empty glass with his fingertips. It seems as if Steve's mind has wondered off somewhere. He stares into the vessel, as if he is searching for something.

While looking at the glass, he explains, " Marty is a hair and makeup artist. He owns a beauty shop and has contracts with production studios. He has to go out on location and he travels a lot. Sometimes he is gone for weeks at a time. It's tough, but some how we keep it together. I guess it would be easier if I weren't so anti-social. For four years I built my world around him. Now he is so successful that he is on the road at least two weeks out of every month. Post cards and phone calls are cool, but man when I need that attention — you know. Cold showers get old real quick." Puzzled, I ask him, "Why don't you have any running buddies? Don't you have your own friends?" Still looking at the glass, as if it had the answer, he replies almost defensively, "Yo, like I said it was all about Marty! Feeling himself getting tense, he calms his voice, sighs and continues. "And, you know most of his friends are so plastic and shit, you know. All they talk about is fashions and club music and which boy might seem like good dick." He looks up at me and starts to laugh, " They're just — tired. And I swear, if one of those bitch's vogues in our new house and fucks up our carpet like they did at our old place — It's on. Some of his friends are cool, but for the most part they are a bunch of aging, gossiping bar bunnies that don't have a clue. Marty has out grown that shit, but he loves his friends and I love Marty."

I tell him, "Yeah, I know Shorty and me only spend weekends together and we only live an hour apart. Shorty's friends are all professional corporate types. It's like a cult. These guys would never go near a nightclub. They have these house parties. "Sets" they call them. They stand around over dressed and bore each other to death. All they seem to talk about is their work and their investments. After an hour or two I have to get out of there. They are cool one or two at a time. They can be real down to earth, but a room full of them just — just fucks with my nerves, you know what I'm sayin'. I also have my own friends and my own life. Shorty has his friends and his life. And you better know I like it that way!" We both start laughing. I continue, " It's tough, because we are both very busy people. There are some nights during the week that I just want him with me. It's not even a sex thing. I just want him there, you know what I'm saying." We both pause, stare off into space thinking about our situations.

Breaking the silence, Steve asks, "So what does this Max look like? Tell me about him." "Well", I explain, "He works in the beauty industry kinda like what Marty does. He used to have his own shop. Max is one of those types that knows everybody and almost never forgets a face. He is kinda short, real dark skinned, and beautiful. He's way out there with his fashions. I mean he thinks nothing of wearing a skirt or blouse out in public. He likes to do half-drag, you know man, skirts and combat boots together, that kinda thing. The last time I saw him he had waist length micro-braids, arched eyebrows, and French tipped fingernails. I've never known him to go out in full drag or ware make-up, but some times he looks so real, lesbians make passes at him." We both start laughing. Steve says, "I can't imagine you hanging with anyone like that. You seem so low key." I reply, "Well, I've known him well over ten years and he's always been that way. I like the fact that he is so free, you know. He doesn't let anyone dictate anything to him. He has always been his own person and I respect him for that." Suddenly out of know where, a voice says, "Bitch you ain't right! You ain't right!" It's Max.

Continuing his read, Max says while laughing, "Over hear in the bar up in some boy's face, but I ain't made at you. Child, he's kinda tasty." I turn and give him a big hug. While still holding him I say to Steve, "Incase you have not guessed already, this is Max, my oldest and dearest friend." Max says while rolling his eyes, "I got your *old* honey. Who is this man you sittin', sippin', and grinnin' wit?" Laughing I say, "This is Steve." Steve stands up and shakes his hand. Max, being the flirt that he is exclaims, "Oh no — I like to hug." Max talks a lot of shit, but he means no harm. Well, not all the time. Steve says suddenly, "Well I have to go now. Louie it was really nice. Please keep in touch with me. I mean it. Don't let run into you a month from now and you haven't called me." Steve gives me a strong lingering hug. He presses his body into mine and through his big shirt and baggy jeans, I could feel just who much he enjoyed our conversation. Smiling and nodding my head, I tell him, "Okay Steve. I'll be in touch." Steve turns and walks away with his hands in both pockets. For some reason I just can't stop smiling. Max looks at me with a dirty smile and says, "Alright thing. Spill it. Give me the dirt. Who is that man? I think I know him, but I know that's not Shorty. You hear me. Don't make me get loud!" Still watching Steve's broad shouldered frame work it's way down the corridor, I explain, "Okay Max okay, It's just a friend. He brought his lover to the airport to drop him off, then he stayed to keep me company until you got hear." Max pauses for a moment and says, "Well Mr. Man, I don't know what kind of *friends* you watch walk away like that. I swear I know him from somewhere. Your eyes have not left him sense he left the bar. Louie, Louie! Child snap out of it." There I was. I just could not stop looking at him and for some reason he kept looking back.

Anyway, once I got over the surprise of seeing Max, I stood back and took a good look. " Max, damn you look good! If you hadn't walk up to me I may not have recognized you." I've have never seen him this conservative. No braids, no nails, hell I didn't think that he could grow a mustache. "Louie you look good to. What happened to that yo homie, dread loc kinda thang you had goin' on. You gettin' old? You gettin' settled Mr. Man?" He always did have a catty, vicious sens of humor. "Just remember Max. No matter how old I get you are just one sweet year behind me." Laughing out loud he replies, "And oh how sweet it is baby! How sweet it is!" We both laugh and begin making our way to the baggage claim. Even though I had not seen him in a year, it seems like he had never left. As we talk about the plain ride and how happy he was to be back., I can tell the year away has done him some good. He is not quite the same. It's as if he has some newfound sense of peace.

What I didn't tell Steve about Max is that he and his X-lover fought like cats and dogs. He and Johnny fought from the time they met until the time Max stabbed him over twenty times. He just has a thing for those rough trade kinda boys. I will never forget it. At 2 am. Max called me and said. "I killed him. I told that crack smoking mutha fucka if he hit me again I would kill him." Concerned about him, I said, "Max baby calm down. I'll be right over." In an angry whisper, Max replied, "Oh, I'm not at the house. When I left, I left and I'm not going back. I'm leaving town. Girl — I'm leaving tonight. He was breathing when I left. I dialed 911 and told them to come get him and I left." I didn't know what to say. "Max where are you? Don't leave like this." I pleaded. Max

replied calmly, "Baby I love you and I will call you from my mother's house. I got to go." Then he hung up the phone. I Jumped in my car and got to their place in time to see the paramedics carry Johnny out of the apartment. I always hated Johnny, but was glad that they had gotten there in time.

Between then and now there have been a few phone calls between us, but even that had stopped. Finally, after a few months, I called Max's mother to find out what was really going on with Max. Miss Betty told me that Max had checked himself into a drug rehabilitation center. She was happy to hear from me. She said, "What Max needs right now is rest. I don't know what all went on down there, but Max's mind is just — just gone. His little face and body are just all— all bruised and — and cut up. He looked like he had been — been kicked around and left for dead. Louie what fool did this to my baby. What the hell happened down there? My baby left here just fine and came back half dead and — crazy as hell!" I didn't have any answers for her. That night, Miss Betty and I cried on the phone together.

Max and I end up back at my place. I call Shorty to let him know that Max made it in okay and to tell him good night. I knew once me and Max start talking, I wouldn't have a chance to do much else. We have a lot of catching up to do. "Louie, what are you going to cook?" Max says, as if he already had something in mind. Max is a fabulous cook and a very picky eater. His not so picky about the food, but very picky about the cook. He seldom eats out. I have the mixed blessing of being one of the few cooks that he prefers. "I'm not sure something quick." I say as I look through the refrigerator and search for something I could cook in a hurry. Max perches himself up onto the counter, smiles and says, "What ever you fix will be fine. Lord knows I missed your cooking when I was gone." I give him a strange look and ask, "What about your mothers cooking?" He and his foster mother have a really good relationship. He was her first foster child. She raised him from the age of two. They fuss and play as if they were brother and sister. The thing they fuss and play most about is cooking. They go on and on about who can out cook who. Each one swears the other can't cook.

He laughs out loud, "Child don't get me started on Miss Betty's cooking. Baby, Miss thing made a casserole one time — oh it stunk so bad. I thought it had sat in the oven over night and spoiled. The whole house was just lit up! Well. I through it out. Hell, I didn't know. Miss Betty comes in from church, you know, dressed in all white with one of those big, church-mother hats on, pushed to one side. She notices it was gone. She said, "I can't believe you ate all of that. You must be felling better." Then I felt kinda bad about throwing it out, so I lied, "Yes Momma, it sho' was good. What did you have in it." It was all I could do not to laugh. And child, you know how slow she talks. Momma said, "Well Maxie, It has some — mushrooms and, um— some sour cream, oh and, you know ...... bread crumbs, tuna, and, um.... canned chicken meat. Oh yeah, it got some green peppers ...... and curry powder." Baby, I just looked at Miss Betty. I was trying to keep from laughing so hard; I started biting my lip. She was going on and on about how good it was and how glad she was that I liked it. Child I held that laugh in so deep tiers started rolling down my face." By this time Max and I are laughing so hard he can hardly finish his story. Still laughing, he went on to say, "Honey, Momma told me

— oh child, she said, “Baby don’t cry I’ll — I’ll make you another one.” All I could do is look down and say, “Okay Momma.” She looked at me and knew something wasn’t right and you know I couldn’t look at her. She paused for a minute looked around the kitchen half grinning and half frowning. Then she stood to one side with one hand up on her *good* hip and her hat in the other. Miss Betty said, “Max, what — what did you do? ” By this time I was looking around, trying to find nearest way out. “Momma I’m not feeling well, I’ma go lay down.” I ease my ass down the hallway to my room, close the door and wait. I know she is about to go off.

That night and all the next day it was as if nothing had happened. That evening when I got home, she had cooked. She had invited some of her other foster kids, you know it was like a reunion. And child there it was. That damn nasty ass casserole that I lied and said loved so much. Miss Betty grinned at me and said, “It so nice to have all of my — my babies home. I made all of your favorites.” That evil cow sat there a watched me eat every bit. She got me good! Child, I was so sick that night. Oh, she got me.” We are laughing so hard that tears are rolling down our faces. Some how, in spite of Max and his madness, I manage to through together some steaks and a big salad. We talked about his situation and agreed that it would be best for him to stay with me for a few months and if he decides to stay in the city than he will start making other arrangements or consider being roommates again. My place is more than big enough. We drink wine and talk the night away. I was smart enough to request one week of vacation time when I found out Max was coming.

I wake up to the smell off heaven on earth. I look down from upstairs in to the kitchen and watch him work. This boy can COOK. I walk down the stairs and into the to find that I’ve been blessed to receive, French toast sprinkled with cinnamon and powdered sugar, home made hash brown smothered in onions, and smoked link sausages. Breakfast was — all that! After we ate, we sat down and talked some more about what happened during the time he was gone. Rather than asking him, I waited until he was ready to talk about it. Max says in a very calm serious voice, “First Louie, I want to thank you for standing by me through all of that craziness. You told me Johnny wasn’t right for me or anyone else. Honey you know how I am about those rough-neck boys. I thought that things would get better, but instead it went from bad to worse to — hell on earth. And thank you for keeping in touch with Miss Betty. That woman knows she just loves her some Louie. She sends you her love, by the way. Anyway, I was not in drug rehabilitation for those six month. I was in the State Mental Hospital recovering from a nervous break down. I guess Momma just had an easier time telling people I was on drugs or whatever.

Child, I checked myself in. I had let myself get to a point where I just — I just didn’t have any more. I felt empty after all that madness with Johnny was over. There was one thing that made me realize I had lost my mine. Even after the beatings and the cheating and the steeling. I was still in love with that crazy son of a bitch. I didn’t want to live. I didn’t want to die. I just didn’t know anything any more. There is a long pause, during which I hold his hand to comfort him as we sit on the couch.

WEEKENDS

marco SANDERS

Thinking about all of the things that make a[illegible] our relationship special, the things I value most are his honesty and his compassion an most of all his since of humor. 5'7", 180 Lbs. and solid as a rock, he looked more like a truck driver than a school teacher. He is a quick wit with a very sharp tongue. If you come for him, you better be ready. We are both very busy people, with demanding careers and hectic schedules, but some how we made it work. Some how I always make time for my baby-- um... my man. I spend the whole week just living for the weekend, just aching to be in his arms again.

Monday morning and I can't wait until Friday night. It's lunch time and I've just called home to check my messages. I'm surprised to hear his voice. "Just sitting at my desk thinking of you." he said. I had just left his house that morning. Still smelling his cologne on my shirt, I smile and look forward to calling him on the phone this evening. Though the week we talk by phone almost daily. "Good morning", "Good night". Conversations are short and sweet with occasional sexual overtones. That man knows how to keep me going.

It's Fridays, I pack my bags. "Gotta go, see ya, my baby is waiting for me and I must get there on time. I arrive 8pm on the dot and there on the porch he stands. Thick , handsome and brown with a smile that made me feel blessed to be in your presents. His name is Wilfred , but I call him Shorty. Grinning from ear- to- ear he says, "Hay baby, how was your week.", and, before I could say a word, he kisses me and makes me lose all since of time and space. We have been seeing each other for two years and things are wonderful. I love spending weekends with my Shorty. Friday evenings with him usually start with dinner, fine wine and good conversation. My baby loves to talk about any and everything. I love to hear him speak...... We wash dinner dishes and retire to his bedroom to relax, snuggle, and unwind. I have not seen my boy all week long and it feels so good to hold him in my arms. The lights are low as we cuddle, kiss and talk about how good it feel to be together again. The radio plays softly. Jazz envelopes us as we dance. As our fully embraced bodies sway and rock the to gentle rhythms, I pull him even closer to me. As my hands glide up and down his back, his body begins speaking to me, showing me what it needs. A since of calmness comes over him. The look on his face tells me that he needs more than dancing conversation. His voice is deep, soft and soothing as he whispers how good our bodyES feel rubbing against each other. His eyes look as if he is plotting, planing a strategy of some kind. He pulls me closer and I know it is time.

Making love to this man is no easy task. He is a very demanding and an aggressive lover. I almost never know what to expect and--- I love him for it. . Thick strong hands grip each of my wrists. As he holds me down his tongue searches my lips, my neck, my chest and all points in between slowly and gently. Goose bumps begin to rise all over my body. My back arches as the stubble of his face rubs against my nipples. I am fully aroused. So aroused that it hurts. He sucks my nipples as he spreads my legs and places my rock hard dick between his firm, thick, hairy thighs and starts to grind. We fit together in such a way that I could feel the opening of his ass with the head of my dick---- Damn it felt good!! 180 pounds of force, pumping and grinding like no tomorrow. As he continues to pump, he tightens his sweaty, slick thighs , squeezing m~~a~~y dick with every stroke. My arms held down, my thighs spread wide, his lips and teeth nipping and

teasing one nipple and then the other and then the other and then the other....... I thought I would lose my mind. With each stroke I become more aware of how good the inside of his hairy ass felt as head of my dick continues to rub against his firm muscular hole. I think to my self....I must have it. With out thought I suddenly say," when this fat dick gets in you, you'll know it belongs to you." this excites him even more. His hard dick slides between our sweating bodies, and his ~~for~~ Fore skin is pulled back exposing sensitive thick round head which has turned red from the friction between us. Still holding my wrists and forearms to keep me in position, he kisses me and began ~~to~~ sucking my tongue. I can tell by the way his body is beginning to jerk, it's about that time. "Eumm!", he grunts. Suddenly his dick seems to explode, spewing his cum from my stomach to my face. Only then did he release my arms. I open my eyes, look in to his smiling face and say , "Damn boy--you needed that didn't you?" "Ua-Ha" he said still grinning as if he had opened a new toy at Christmas that he can't wait to play with. We both laugh as we wipe his "explosion" from our bodies and faces. "You didn't cum?", He asks , looking puzzled and concerned. "Oh I will--I've got plans for you little man." I replied, contemplating which way I was going to fuck him this time. He sees the look in my eyes and seems re-assured that all is well.

As I sit hear wiping off, I look at him and I am amazed that such a gentle man contains so much passion. I say jokingly, " You know, you one a dem intensified kinda boys, ain't ya." We both laugh, fall into each others arms, and rest before round two. He puts his head on my chest and snuggles up to me like a small child sleeping on his father. I cradle him in my arms, rub his bald head and hum him to sleep. I watch slumber in my arms. His heavy breathing is only interrupted by a snuggle as he tries to pull me even closer to him. These are the times that I fell closest to him. ~~It's moments like these that I miss the most~~.

The sound of running water awakens me. "Shorty", I call out in a sleepy , lazy voice, "Shorty, why are you up so damn early?" It is Saturday morning and there is no telling what this man has planed. We may end up at the museum, at a friends house playing cards, or what ever, it was all good. I enjoyed our Saturday outings and look forward to what ever the day may hold. .

I jumped in to the shower with ~~behind~~ him. Sometimes I forget how beautiful this man is. Watching the soapy water flow slowly down the back of neck his and between his shoulders blades, I start to become aroused. As I watch this white foamy trail of soap travel down the center of his back to his round firm ass, my body reminds me that it has a need that must be met. He feels my piece at the base of his back and says," Don't get me started, we have a lot to do." " Gone now." I pull him closer to me. I start licking the soap from his ears, his neck , his shoulders, and work my way down. My man has the perfect ass. "Stop now!" trying to sound like he means it. By this time I am on my knees. The water runs down my face as my hands spread his cheeks and my tongue searches for that smooth place ware pleasure is found. I take my time. Making sure that all areas are covered, that every hair has had equal attention, I begin to rub his balls and push my tongue deep inside him, again and again. I stop suddenly. "What?", he said. " Remember, we have a lot to do today.", I replied, as I look at is rock hard dick. He looks pissed. We finish showering and get ready to indulge in our Saturday activities. Through out the course of the day I noticed that he was erect several times. Each time he had an erection he would give me that plotting, planing look again. Finally we are at our last stop for the day. As we stand in the check-out line I whisper in his ear, "I didn't upset you this morning did I."

"Louie, you know you wrong. My shit's been hard all day thinking about that shit." he laughed. " You know that shit makes me crazy." The cashier looks puzzled as we both laugh out loud, " It's about that time!!" We are such a silly couple. Our friends all say that we looked like brothers and acted more like best friends than lovers.

We pull up in the drive way and begin unloading. Groceries, cloths, lawn chair and other various bags of whatever. Shorty lives to shop. I finish unloading the truck and he starts dinner. Looks like it is going to be a quite evening at home. I smile as a wonder what this evening will unfold. We dined on collard greens, baked pork chops, and potato salad.   He has eaten to much and his stomach killing him.   As we watch television , he puts his feet in my lap. I laugh and say, "No one told you to eat all that shit man." "But, it was so good." he whined in a pitiful voice, like a child being punished. I begin rubbing his stomach to comfort him. As he drifts off to sleep he whispers, "I love you Louie--You know that, don't you?" "Yes baby" I said, "I love you too." By this time it's 9 pm. and we both lay napping on the couch.

Half asleep I feel his lips tickling the palms of my hands. That's hes way of waking me up. He begins kissing his way up my thighs and starts to nuzzle my balls. It's my guess that he feels a little better. "Let's take it to the room." , he growled in low voice. I respond in a playful, yo hommie voice," I'ma take des shit to da hole Shorty." , "I'ma represent all up in that," "Alright daddy, you better come correct." he laughs as he walk toward the bed room, undressing. He likes it when I talk rough to him. Even though he's a very masculine man, he likes being treated like a bitch.

Femine

Both of us stand at the foot of the bed naked and excited. He gives me a twisted look and says," Alright Hommie, make me your bitch." I push him down on to the bed and it's on. We rolled and wrestled around and around. Kissing, sucking, licking and biting, it was a mess. He looks up at me in a way that said fuck me now. Enjoying this sex game, "Hommie and the Bitch.", I flip him over and start to grind. I suck the back of his neck and shoulders as my fingers search for that smooth place that sends chills through his body. "Eumm-shit," he grunts in a whispers. By now I have two of my fingers inside of him. " Damn that hole feels wright!", "I've got to go up in it!", " You gone gimmie that ass bitch, hua, you gone gimmie that good ass.", my voice getting louder and rougher with each statement.   He whispered desperately-- impatiently, "Yes Louie, I've been wanting you all day long", "I've been waiting for this all week." Knowing that he likes it rough, I snatch him by his ankles to the foot of the bed and set him up on his knees, "Doggy Style". I couldn't see his face, but I could tell that it caught him of guard garde. I guess he forgets just how much "Hommie" I can be. I think to my self (Don't tence up now, the fun has just begun). I drop to one knee and start liking his balls and working my way up. As my tongue works its way to the center of his soul. Shorty's body begins to tremble. "Oh shit" he sighs. "Damn you got me crazy".   While I continue licking and tasting his most sensitive area, I slip on my condom. It is time. I stand behind him and and rub his back as I begin a slow but steady entry. His ass feels tight around the head of my dick. "Auh" Shorty whimpers. I pause , then continue. Slowly, I work my in to that tight wet place I call heaven on earth, Shorty's ass. Shory's ass is so good, that it's worth writing songs about. On his elbows and knees he rocks with me as his body relaxes and opens up.   All I want to do is ride and ride and ride. "Yea Louie, get it!" He

commanded. It was on. The more I pumped the more he seemed to want. It was as if we were running a race and the one who ~~ever~~ cums first is the loser. His body becoms tight and tence you know what that means. He spreads his thighs even further apart and starts to jack his dick. I drop low and pump as hard fast and deep as I can. Damn this ass is good!! He brings out all of the dog in me. “Eummm shit!!” he roars. “Is it good shorty”, “Yes baby--oh God yes, shit”, “ Come on Shorty, come on shorty!” I shouted again and again. My hand cracks like a whip against his sweaty ass. With each smack Shorty and I come closer and closer to losing the race in this twisted sex game that we both love so much. All at once “Auh!!” He pushes his face into the bed groaning. For a moment I black out, I have no since of where I am. A High like no drug could ever produce. I almost lose my balance. I regain consciousness only to realize that we both lose. I collapse on top of him. Sweaty and exhausted we lay there ginning, laughing, and gasping for air. Cool September breezes glide over our moist bodies a we slip into a restful repose.

What's Really Going On?

Black, Gay, HIV+ and OUT

By Marco Sanders

Duncan

It is surprising, no, astounding that HIV has been around for so many years, and yet my African-American brothers and sisters are still testing positive for this virus at a much higher rate then our white counter parts.

Malik

We often hear about HIV/AIDS on TV news, news paper or magazine articles, or and occasional public speakers living with the virus. While the information that popular media provides is valuable, I don't feel that they address the real issues such as dating, disclosure, support and other issues sounding HIV/AIDS that everyday people are concerned with.

Tony

Living with this virus as an openly Gay, openly HIV+, black man since 1990, I have seen and experienced a broad range of attitudes from my brothers and sisters. Some very supportive, others--well lets say that some people are more compassionate and enlightened than others. Some embrace me and encourage me to continue my work in the community as an AIDS advocate, others tell me I'm a fool for putting business out there.

Tony

Statements like,

Duncan

"Boy I don't Know why you tell folks you sick. Don't you know all they gone do is talk about you?"

Malik

, are not that uncommon,

Tony

but I don't let that stop me from doing what I feel I must do. I'm the first to admit that being an AIDS advocate and being OUT as gay and HIV+ has a price.

Duncan

People sometimes look at you, observe you in a way that makes you feel like you're under a magnifying glass.

Malik

In night clubs people think, because the music is loud, that I can't hear what they say about me. The muse

Oh, I hear them.

Tony

Some bold, rude bitches will call you out

Duncan

"What he coming hear for, don't nobody want to be bothered wit him."

Malik

" Girl--don't go there, child he got that shit!"

Tony

or (my personal favorite)

Duncan/Malik

"Miss thang got a cross on her back!"

Tony

I guess it is a cross I've chosen to bare.

Duncan/Malik

Why do it?

Tony

It is not for fame, fortune, or notoriety.
It is not to make amens for my sins
It is not to justify who or what I am
It is because I love my people, my beautiful African descended, multi-shaded, multifaceted people. They are why I do what I feel I must do.

Malik

"Boy, what went through your mind?",

Tony

I sometimes ask myself. Even after four years of various types of community service, I sometimes wonder if my work is in vain.

Duncan

You can't save the world,

Tony

hell, I can't save myself.

Tony

In spite of the strange looks and rejection that I have experienced, It is worth it to know that there are people who care.

Duncan

There are people that may not test positive because they are more aware.

Malik
The thought that some people may become less afraid of people living with the virus inspires me to move forward.

Tony
It is also important that I present a positive image of what it is to be Black, Gay and HIV+. So many HIV+ people suffer in silence and die alone, never having the courage to tell their family and friends. Why?

Malik
Our black gay community makes it hard to be less than perfect. If you don't have beautiful, smooth skin,

Duncan
tight hard bodies, designer cloths and a college degree with a bank roll to match,

The Muse
you are subject to reticule.

Duncan
When you achieve these goals you then become rejected because,

Malik
"You think you all that!"

The Muse
You're damned if you do and damned if you don't.

Duncan
It is ironic that people who have suffered so much rejection refuse to embrace their own.

Malik
Living in a white dominated society we try to conform to standards that are not our own.

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Decade after decade of the media telling us that blacks are not as good as whites and churches condemning us for loving other men has taught us to hate ourselves.

The muse
" When you hate being a black, gay man you cannot love black, gay men."

Tony
" Now add HIV to that, shack it up and see what rises to the top."

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I'll tell you what rises to the top, fear--fear of the ultimate rejection. The kind of rejection that degrees, money, status and good looks may not over come.

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"O.K. bitch, you can eat in the best restaurants, wear the best rages and give body for days, but you still got AIDS."

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If you already have hard time dealing with being black and gay, AIDS may be the thing that sends you through it for the last time.

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Some black gay men's desire to be accepted can be so strong that it out weighs their need to take care of themselves. They don't want to get tested for HIV, if they are HIV+ they don't want to know. If they do test positive for HIV, they will pretend they don't have it.

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I'm not saying that anyone who is HIV+ should tell everyone their business, but I do believe that there is no reason why we should not love ourselves enough to face reality and deal with our issues.

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Baggage

What is it?

Cargo....Paraphernalia....Packages.....Payload....

Large, bitter, pitiful emotional burdens from the past, that are carried like luggage as we travel through life. It gets carried from relationship to relationship to relationship.

Some people travel from port to port picking up souvenirs, artifacts and even other peoples lost parcels.

Others Rome from destination to destination in hopes that some will store their baggage for them so that they may take off, burden free, for parts unknown.

Others feel that they can't travel at all unless they can find someone to carry their belongings for them.

Some take on other peoples baggage in addition to their own --until the payload becomes to heavy. They feel walled in and are no longer able to travel. For them the journey is over.

Child--Sometimes we drag it around for so long we forget what's in it *and* who put it there.

It's been said time and time again.

"I don't have time for folks wit a hol lota baggage"
"Man-- you can keep yo problems to yo self."
"Child-- I got enough of my own shit to deal with!"

These comments often come from the same people who clam, "They can't find nobody."

Now I don't mind dating some one who's been though a change or two. They say it takes going through some hard times to appreciate the good, but I'm not going to spend to much time climbing walls I didn't build.

I know what it's like. I've been burned a time or two, but the person that hurt me ain't sitting around lonely.......hell--why should I!" " And another thing, why should I let some one effect my life who isn't even in my life any more?!"

Rather than using baggage to build walls, why not use it to gain wisdom?

Look inside of it and use the lessons learned from these hard times to help us understand and appreciate the possibilities that lie before us, rather than being afraid of them.

The walls you build to protect you from pain and sorrow will also block out love and joy.
The shell that feels so warm and secure can also smother you.

Can today's joy and laughter be appreciated if we are worried about tomorrow?
Many people believe that, **"nothing lasts forever."**
If this is true, it is even more crucial to make the most of each day. **Cherish each moment**.

Can the beauty and freshness of new experiences be relished if we sentence ourselves to carry the burdens of ugly and rotten things from the past? Pain is meant strengthen our hearts and minds not stifle our ability to love and trust. With pain come wisdom.

Exoneration

Do you need emotional liberation---a spiritual acquittal? Do situations and/or people from your past still haunt you and make you fell bitter, angry, or depressed? Do you find it hard to love, and even harder to trust? If so, you may need self exoneration.

Forgive them.........Exonerate yourself............Move forward

Why dismiss the emotional nourishment that souls need to survive
Why not see what's there

Why over complicate life with pessimistic points of view
Why not embrace positive possibilities

Why let clouds from storms gone by make our new days seem cold, dark, and menacing
why not believe the skies will be clear, warm, and welcoming again

Why allow forces that are no longer present to constrain you
Take control of your life and stop living in the past

Why not learn to live and laugh and love one day, one hour, one moment at a time.
Eenjoy life........ while there is life to enjoy

Nothing lasts forever Cherish each moment.
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Baggage

By Marco Sanders, 6/7/97

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Why dismiss the emotional nourishment that souls need to survive
Explore what is there

Why over complicate life with pessimistic points of view
Embrace positive possibilities

Why let your past mistakes condemn you to a dark and loveless life
Trust yourself and believe you deserve happiness

Why allow forces that are no longer present to constrain you
Take control of your life and stop living in the past

Why not learn to live and laugh and love one day, one hour, one moment at a time.
Enjoy life........ while there is life to enjoy

Nothing lasts forever Cherish each moment.
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Nourishing Storms

By Marco 12/8/97

My eyes are closed as the morning sun warms my face. I lay in a field relaxed under the cloudless summer sky, a warm sky of clear certainty. The smell on green grass and the feel of the well-nourished earth makes me feel secure and content in all that is familiar. I am safe from the uncertainty of storms. They say that storms clean the air and nourish the earth. They are the symbols of new beginnings. I called them necessary evils. When storms came I would run for shelter and pray for clear skies.

One summer morning, years ago, I sat calm and content, warm in the summer sun. It was that summer morning that my familiar surroundings became clouded and uncertain. A refreshing breeze interrupted the stillness of the hot summer air that enveloped me. Through the lids of my closed eyes saw the shadows of clouds blocking the light of the sun. I opened my eyes to see that one shadow came not from a cloud, but from him. Like storms nourish the earth, he would nourish my heart, my body and my mind.

Things were calm at first. The cool winds were rousing, but they were also unfamiliar. I was used to the still, hot summer air. More intrigued than intimidated I continued to allow those cooling, gentle currents to caress my skin as small clouds began fill my clear summer sky. The winds grew colder. What was clear and familiar, became obscure and uncertain, yet it seemed to have warmth of it's own. Unlike the familiar heat summer sun against my skin, these winds gave me chill bumps and warmed me from deep within.

As these strange, enchanting winds swirled around me, the smell of rain filled the air and the droplets soothed my skin and awakened my senses. Unlike the calming warmth of the sun, the feel of the rain frightened me yet I stayed there unmoved. The beads of water left their mark as they slowly tricked down my face and down my bare chest. The winds began to feel cold against my wet skin. The sky grew even darker as the winds became more forceful. The sheltering trees were stripped of their leaves as our storm began to intensify.

The thunder rumbled through me as lightning flashed through his eyes. It was too late to run for shelter; too late have clung to anything that felt safe or familiar. I felt compelled to ride out this storm. Making its' presence known, a funnel cloud appeared before me. My body trembled, as its' huge and ominous being touched down onto my reality. There was no fear of the certain devastation. Tearing its way deep into the earth, its force snapped branches, up-rooted trees and knocked down the walls that used to feel so secure. I knew now then that I was forever changed. The walls that I once ran to for shelter are walls that could never surround me again.

That storm left a path of destruction and mayhem in a place that once was orderly and well structured. That which was clear and certain became riddled doubt and vacillation. The structures that sheltered me from storms laid in ruin amongst the up-rooted trees, downed power lines and other scattered remains of a reality that proved to be far fetched

and antiquated. It would take a while to absorb and take account of all the ideals and standards that had been tranformed.

The clouds slowly cleared away and the air had never smelled as sweet. The sky's clarity became brilliant. The warmth of the summer sun seemed more welcoming and genuine. I felt akin to the earth that comforted me. I knew then what it was to be well nourished.

They say that it takes a storm to nourish the earth. They say that storms symbolize new beginnings. I lay in a field relaxed under a clear and cloudless sky, comforted by the warmth of the familiar summer sun. The smell on green grass and the feel of the well-nourished earth makes me feel secure and content in all that is familiar. I too crave the nourishment of summer storms. Sometimes I pray for rain.

The Tail of Miss Pucci

By Marco 12/1/97

I knew a Fem-Queen
They called him Miss Pucci
He had a bad weave
And fake leather Gucci

One night at a party
I was shocked and surprised
Miss Pucci said, "Honey,
I don't raise my thighs

You think, cause I'm fem
That I don't like some booty
Well just look at him
That short muscle-bound cutie

It happened one night
When I was out walkin'
He and his home-boys
Were standin' round talkin'

They said, "Hey Miss thing
You g'on give me some ass
I said, "Tired Trade please
Not if you were the last

And then little Shorty
Got up in my face
I said, "Bitch, back up off me
I'll douse you with mace

I said, “Look hard trade
You fine little creature
Your dick in my ass
Is not what I feature

He put up a big fight,
But I still stuck it in
I fucked him so good
He said, “Do it again!”

The crowd they all laughed
At his little story
All except me and
That fine Trade named Shorty

I looked at that boy
Whos’ poor cunt he busted
And said to Miss Pucci
“Bitch you can’t be trusted.

To say it out loud
Right here in his face
It’s dirty and low
Miss thing, you disgrace.”

He said, “Well look here Miss Girl
When you pay for it dear
You can tell it on the mountain
To all listening ears

Don’t get hot with me
Cause I’ll set you straight
It’s not my fault Doll
That I busted your date”

I said, “Oh, Don’t worry
It’s easy. Wait you’ll see
The pain, joy and pleasure
Of giving up pussy”

I heard this and said
“Oh child, what a pity
That old Fem Queen made
This boy give up his kitty.”

Miss Pucci paused and smiled
Then sipped on his drink
The crowd that was listening
Didn’t know what to think

Miss Pucci he lived
For all this attention
Kept them standing on edge
That was his intention

He continued his story
And he told it right
The joy and the horror
Of the that freaky night

“I pulled down his pants
I sucked on his dick
Spread-open his ass
And gave it a lick

He said, “You big sissy
Give me some of that ass
It smells kinda of pissy
So I’ll make it fast”

I said to this man
“Yeah, let’s go to my place.”
While thinking of ways
That I might ride his face

You know he was in
For quite a surprise
You know I don’t spread,
Bend or lift-up my thighs

As we walked I just looked
At this fine little cutie
On me he’ll be hooked
When he gives me that booty

We got to my door
And I turned the key
I said to this man
“Yo Homes, follow me”

I lead this poor fool
To the foot of my bed
I bit on his chest
I rubbed his fat head

I said, “Hay little man
Let’s try a new trick
Instead of you screwing
Let me use my dick”

He looked at me, Girl
His eyes filled of fright
didn’t think that he’d be
Riding penis that night

He said, “I just came
To apologize
Please don’t spray that shit
All up in my eyes

I just saw you walkin’
Tall skinny and cute
Instead of us talkin’
Let’s go knock some boot”

I looked in his eyes
And he seemed quite sincere
He made my dick rise
That fine, butch, young queer

I said, “Alright Shorty
Just what do you do?
Do they call you a Top.
Trade do you like to screw?”

He said, “Yes baby please
I love some tight ass
I’ll be as good as your first
And as hot as your last.”

I looked at this boy
Standing in the street light
And I said to myself
He’ll be tasty, all right.

That dark, hard body
How It made my knees shake
Flat stomach, bow legs
Child, thank God for his cakes

What's Really Going On?

Black, Gay, HIV+ and OUT

By Marco Sanders

Duncan

It is surprising, no, astounding that HIV has been around for so many years, and yet my African-American brothers and sisters are still testing positive for this virus at a much higher rate then our white counter parts.

Malik

We often hear about HIV/AIDS on TV news, news paper or magazine articles, or and occasional public speakers living with the virus. While the information that popular media provides is valuable, I don't feel that they address the real issues such as dating, disclosure, support and other issues sounding HIV/AIDS that everyday people are concerned with.

Tony

Living with this virus as an openly Gay, openly HIV+, black man since 1990, I have seen and experienced a broad range of attitudes from my brothers and sisters. Some very supportive, others--well lets say that some people are more compassionate and enlightened than others. Some embrace me and encourage me to continue my work in the community as an AIDS advocate, others tell me I'm a fool for putting business out there.

Tony

Statements like,

Duncan

"Boy I don't Know why you tell folks you sick. Don't you know all they gone do is talk about you?"

Malik

are not that uncommon,

Tony

but I don't let that stop me from doing what I feel I must do. I'm the first to admit that being an AIDS advocate and being OUT as gay and HIV+ has a price.

Duncan

People sometimes look at you, observe you in a way that makes you feel like you're

under a magnifying glass.

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In night clubs people think, because the music is loud, that I can't hear what they say about me.

The Muse

Oh, I hear them.

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or (my personal favorite)

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"Miss thang got a cross on her back!"

Tony

I guess it is a cross I've chosen to bare.

Duncan/Malik

Why do it?

Tony	**Duncan**	**Malik**
It is not for fame,	fortune,	or notoriety.

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It is not to	make amends for my sins

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It is because	I love my people,

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my beautiful African descended,	multi-shaded,	multifaceted people.

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They are why I do what I feel I must do.

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"Boy, what went through your mind?"

Tony
I sometimes ask myself. Even after four years of various types of community service, I sometimes wonder if my work is in vain.

Duncan
You can't save the world,
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hell, I can't save myself.

Tony
In spite of the strange looks and rejection that I have experienced, It is worth it to know that there are people who care.
Duncan
There are people that may not test positive because they are more aware.
Malik
The thought that some people may become less afraid of people living with the virus inspires me to move forward.
Tony
It is also important that I present a positive image of what it is to be Black, Gay and HIV+. So many HIV+ people suffer in silence and die alone, never having the courage to tell their family and friends.
The Muse (rounds)
Why?
Malik
Our black gay community makes it hard to be less than perfect. If you don't have beautiful, smooth skin,

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tight hard bodies, designer cloths and a college degree with a bank roll to match,
The Muse
you are subject to ridicule.
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When you achieve these goals you then become rejected because,
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"You think you all that!"
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You're damned if you do and damned if you don't.

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It is ironic that people who have suffered so much rejection refuse to embrace their own.
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"Boy, what went through your mind?"

Tony
I sometimes ask myself. Even after four years of various types of community service, I sometimes wonder if my work is in vain.

Duncan
You can't save the world,
Tony
hell, I can't save myself.

Tony
In spite of the strange looks and rejection that I have experienced, It is worth it to know that there are people who care.
Duncan
There are people that may not test positive because they are more aware.
Malik
The thought that some people may become less afraid of people living with the virus inspires me to move forward.
Tony
It is also important that I present a positive image of what it is to be Black, Gay and HIV+. So many HIV+ people suffer in silence and die alone, never having the courage to tell their family and friends.
The Muse (rounds)
Why?
Malik
Our black gay community makes it hard to be less than perfect. If you don't have beautiful, smooth skin,

Duncan
tight hard bodies, designer cloths and a college degree with a bank roll to match,
The Muse
you are subject to ridicule.
Duncan
When you achieve these goals you then become rejected because,
Malik
"You think you all that!"
The Muse
You're damned if you do and damned if you don't.

Duncan
It is ironic that people who have suffered so much rejection refuse to embrace their own.
Malik

Living in a white dominated society we try to conform to standards that are not our own.
Tony
Decade after decade of the media telling us that
Malik
blacks are not as good as whites
Tony
and churches
Duncan
condemning us for loving other men
Tony
has taught us to hate ourselves.

The Muse (rounds)
"When you hate being a black, gay man
Duncan
"When you hate being a black, gay man you cannot love black, gay men."
Tony
"Now add HIV to that, shake it up and see what rises to the top."
Duncan
I'll tell you what rises to the top, fear--fear of the ultimate rejection. The kind of rejection that degrees, money, status and good looks may not over come.
Tony
"O.K. bitch, you can eat in the best restaurants, wear the best rags and give body for days, but you still got AIDS."
Malik
If you already have hard time dealing with being black and gay, AIDS may be the thing that sends you through it for the last time.

Duncan
Some black gay men's desire to be accepted can be so strong that it outweighs their need to take care of themselves. They don't want to get tested for HIV, if they are HIV+ they don't want to know. If they do test positive for HIV, they will pretend they don't have it.
Malik
The ones who piss me off the most are the ones who don't want to make their sex partners use condoms because they don't want to blow the mood. Many feel that if they were not having sex with men they would not have HIV and they suffer in shame and silence.
Tony
I'm not saying that anyone who is HIV+ should tell everyone their business, but I do believe that there is no reason why we should not love ourselves enough to face

Denial II

Marco Sanders 1/17/1998

Deny – declaring not true; refusing to agree; withholding use; possession, or enjoyment of

I look at you and I love you as I have for many years. You are my people.

You stand there looking at me, rubbing your piece as you lick your lips and watch me get dressed. You say you're not Gay. "Oh man, I just fuck around now and then." Maybe you see me as this brother you can hang out with and not get clocked; Some homie that you can kick it with, while your ladies taking care of home. I just look at you.

You know I want you, but you wonder why I've never tried to have you. You see it's because I am Gay. It's more than just a fuck. I have the ability to love another man completely and openly. Holding his hand on our front porch, down our street, and at my mother's dinner table. Living with that man. I enjoy the pleasure of full and complete passion, a passion that can't be expressed or reciprocated if you don't know who the hell you are or what the fuck you want.

Yeah my brotha'... You claim there's no shame in your game, while you get your dick sucked in darkness by anonymous queens that settle for such shit because they think of you as trade. Punks filled with so much self-hate, they think just because you look and act like a street thug that you are somehow "*a real man*".

Talking about what you will do to a woman… It's not those *girls'* legs that you want to spread, while you are out with your homies at straight bars. Checking out the straight girls knowing all the while… knowing damn well pussy isn't what's on your mind.

"It's all about the money yo. I don't go out like that"

Bitch please… Telling me stories about punks sucking your dick; of sissies swallowing your cum, and how good it feels. But what confuses me is that when you look at me it's not my lips or my ass that gains your attention. Um-hum mutha' fucka', you rub your dick Mr. man. You dapp around and acting hard and shit while you deny the urges that your curiosity inspires.

Yeah trade boy… You say you like it when the boys give you head, but your eyes tell me that the ones you call sissies and punks aren't giving all that you want… and now we are alone.

Don't look at me like that. When you ask me silly questions about what dick feels like. Does ass feel like pussy? What I do with my men's dicks? What feels good about it? Asking me everything but what you really want to know.

Mutha' fucka'… It's not my ass or my lips that you look at; that you glance down at as we speak exchanging hellos and other small talk salutations. Over the years I've grown wise enough to know what's on your mind.

Yeah Homie… Don't you want to suck this dick? Don't you want to know how it feels to have a man like me place my hands on either side head push this fat shaft past your lips to your throat again and again.

Why are you trembling? You know I'm Gay. You've known it for years. I'm one of those punk-sissies that you talk about as you rub your piece when you are hanging with your boys. But you forget… I'm a man first. I don't kee-kee or flame like your other tricks, but as they say tricks are for kids. I'm a man.

Tell me something. Have you ever tasted a mans' lips, firm and rough against your tongue? Have you ever wondered what it might feel like if a brother like me licked your ass or pushed a dick deep inside you?

Don't close your eyes… Look at me while I'm talking to you.

See mutha' fucka'… I know what's up. It doesn't get me hot or make me want to drop to my knees when I hear your little stories. You say it's not *real* to you. Why don't you bend over and show me your *reality*. Let me heighten sensitivity and broaden your horizons and fill you up with a deeper understanding.

Nourishing Storm

By Marco 12/8/97

My eyes are closed as the morning sun warms my face. I lay in a field surrounded by sheltering trees and relax under the cloudless summer sky, a warm sky of clear certainty. Feeling the well-nourished earth beneath me, I feel secure and content. The smell of green grass, dandy lions and clover fill my nostrils as I breathe deep and enjoy this moment. The calmness of this summer morning cradles me in all that is familiar. I am safe from the uncertainty of storms.

They say that storms clean the air and nourish the earth. They are the symbols of new beginnings. I used to fear them. You never know how long they will last. What changes might these wild disruptions bring? What pain or destruction may result from these unpredictable occurrences? I called them necessary evils. When storms came I would run for shelter. I would retreat into safe boundaries. I would pray for clear skies.

One summer morning, years ago, I lay calm and content in this field, warm in the summer sun. It was that summer morning that my familiar surroundings became clouded and uncertain. A mysterious breeze interrupted the stillness of the hot summer air that enveloped me. Through the lids of my closed eyes I saw the shadows of clouds blocking the light of the sun as they moved across the sky, but one shadow stayed unmoved. I opened my eyes to see that this shadow came not from a cloud, but from him. Like storms nourish the earth, He nourished my heart, my body and my mind.

Things were calm at first. The slow, cool winds were rousing, but they were also unfamiliar. I was used to the stillness of the hot summer air. More intrigued than intimidated I continued to allow those cooling, gentle currents to caress my skin as small clouds began fill my clear summer sky. The winds grew cooler. What was clear and familiar, became obscure and uncertain, yet it seemed to have warmth of it's own. Unlike the familiar heat summer sun against my skin, these winds gave me chills that warmed me from deep within.

As these strange, enchanting winds softly swirled around me, the fresh smell of rain filled the air. The sky was misty and gray as it released

droplets that soothed my skin and awakened my senses. Unlike the calming warmth of the sun, the feel of the rain frightened me yet I stayed there unmoved. The beads of water left their mark as they slowly tricked down my face and into the corner of my mouth. Mixed with the sweat of my skin the rain had an odd, sweet, salty taste, as I licked the moisture from my lips. It seemed to quench a thirst that I had not yet acknowledged.

The beads of water continued their slow journey down my neck, my chest, and the rest of my shirtless body. The winds began to feel cold against my wet skin, but there was an exotic sort of ease within its rolling gusts. The sky grew even darker as the winds became more forceful. The sheltering trees were being stripped of their leaves as our storm began to intensify. Thunder rumbled through me as lightning flashed through his eyes. It was too late to run for shelter; too late have clung to anything that was safe or familiar. I felt compelled to ride out this storm.

Making its presence known, a funnel cloud appeared before me. It descended as if it was in slow motion, but seemed certain of its destiny. My body trembled, as its' huge and ominous being touched down onto my reality. As it gradually began to make its path, I knew that it would consume all that it touched. In awe of its forbidding yet beckoning presence, I became entranced. I Knew that it could destroy all that was common and customary in my existence and yet I had no fear of this certain devastation. Tearing its way deep into the earth, its force snapped branches, up-rooted trees and knocked down the walls of what used to feel so safe and secure. The boundaries that preserved my reality and the beliefs that I once ran to for shelter could never surround me again. I knew then that I was forever changed.

That storm left a path of destruction and mayhem in a place that once was orderly and well contained. That which was clear and certain became riddled doubt and vacillation. The structures that sheltered me from chaos lay in ruin amongst the up-rooted trees and other scattered remains of a life that proved to be far fetched and antiquated. A reality that was no longer my own. Much like the time it takes for the earth to break down and ingest the refuse of storms, it would take a while to fully comprehend and digest all of the mixed emotions that this storm had created within me. It would take even longer to account for all of

the ideas and standards that had been transformed from my old existence into my new state of being. It was a new beginning.

In time the clouds slowly cleared away and the calm morning air smelled sweeter than ever. The summer sky gained a new clarity and brilliance. The warmth of the sun seemed more welcoming and genuine. I felt akin to the earth that comforted me. I knew then what it was to be nourished.

They say that it takes a storm to nourish the earth. They say that storms symbolize new beginnings. I'm no longer afraid of their uncertainty. I lay in a field relaxed under a clear and cloudless sky. I am comforted by the warmth of the familiar summer sun. The smell of green grass and the feel of the well-nourished earth make me feel secure and content in all that is familiar. Like the earth, I too crave to be well nourished. Sometimes I pray for rain.

The Gathering

Marco 1/4/1998

One year I got caught
And it made me sick
It was my turn to host
The yearly picnic

They enjoy hosting parties
An honor I guess
When we all get together
Get drunk and talk mess

Playing Spades and Bid-Wiz
Dancing to old tunes
While others smoke weed
Back in the spare room

Some just sit and talk
At the dinning room table
About old days and new days
And when they were able

Gatherings like those
Always good times for me
But it's my turn to host
So I'll just wait and see

I'm lucky that most
In my cirlce are friends
And some even claim
To be next of kin

There're two on the list
Each one hates the other
Years before I came out
They used to be lovers

Miss Pucci and Percy
Sweet as sugar dust
But when they're together
They read, fight, and cuss

Some say years ago Percy
Caught Pucci with a man
He had trades big dick wrapped
With both of his hands

Others say that Miss Pucci
Had done nothing wrong
Though Percy was hung
He just couldn't perform

Miss Pucci and Percy
My Gay Mom and Dad
They fuss and they fight
Like cantankerous fags

Each one always tries
To out read the other
They each flame so much
Don't know which to call mother

I love them both dearly
It gets hard you see
The winner of these fights
Must be picked by me

This year they would be
Entertained at my house
I bought lots of liquor
And I warned my spouse

My spouse Shorty said
“Why have both at once?
One’s an alcoholic
The others a dunce

I know that you love them
But let’s make it clear
I can’t deal with those two
I will not be here”

I got kinda pissed
But I smiled instead
Of knocking my Shorty
Up side his big head

Years ago there’s a story
In which Pucci lied
Said he paid to fuck Shorty
And ruined his pride

We all knew Pucci lied
But since that cold night
Shorty hates that old bitch
Wants to shot him on sight

Shorty also said, “Percy
That old lying drunk
Claims to be such a man
When he’s just an old punk”

I knew Shorty'd be pissed
Cause we had to play host
He can take either one
But he could not take both

When Miss Pucci arrived
He was already ripped
Coming down the side walk
With both hands on his hips

With a straw bag and hat
Pants with a flared cuff
He tips down the sidewalk
Just strutting his stuff

He got to the door
"Oh child I'm so beat
Get me a cold drink
Fetch Miss Pucci a seat"

Shorty got him a drink
And then started to laugh
"Aren't those stairs too steep
For your old sissy ass"

Pucci laughed, "Yes I'm old
But I've got a new look
Thought I'd come here and see
Which young man I could hook"

I heard Pucci say it
Had to see for myself
Child what I saw almost
Scared me to death

I came from the kitchen
And to my surprise
He had Blue green contacts
In both of his eyes

He pulled off his straw hat
I tried not to stare
He had blond, micro-braid
Shoulder length hair

Pucci had French tips
On his fingers and toes
And a small silver hoop
On one side of his nose

He smiled and hugged me
And said, “Child don’t lie
Thought you’d like my new look
Girl I’m Mary J. Blige”

I smiled and gagged
Then kissed his soft cheek
I just nodded my head
Cause I couldn’t speak

Pucci asked, “Is your dad
That old church queen here
Him and his new hoochie
That raggedy queer?”

I said to Miss Pucci
“He called me at noon
Said he and his new friend
Should be here quite soon”

Shorty heard this and said
“Well I’ve got to hit it
Hope y’all have a good time
But me here, forget it

You’re okay one on one
But together you fight
I don’t need no headaches
This hot summer night”

Shorty kissed me and grabbed
The keys to the truck
Waved his hand and said
“Bye baby. Good luck.”

Miss Pucci said, “Baby
Fix me something to eat
And bring me a big stool
Let me rest these old feet”

Pucci had ate then
Laid down for a rest
The party was on as
I welcomed my guests

All my friends were here
They came right on time
Some brought their own liquor
While others brought wine

Young sissies were dancing
Old queens talking shit
The Miss Girls that gossip were
Gave each other fits

When who should show up
A sight for sour eyes
My Gay Dad's big car
Pulled up in my drive

He is a church queen
His first name was Percy
His big juicy lips
They always seemed thirsty

Short and bow legged
A handsome old man
Well groomed mustache
And red wine in his hand

He walked in the house
With some short, fem cutie
A round pretty face
And a tight little booty

Always happy to see me
He gave me a hug
I kissed his bald head and
I gave it a rub

His little friend frowned
Like something was wrong
Then he rolled his eyes
"She ain't known me that long"

I said, "Who is this person
You brought in my house
She's rude, can't she speak
Does Miss thing have a mouth?

Percy said, “He’s not rude
He really quite nice
Just sick and hung over
We partied last night

His real name is Pete
But they call him Miss Grace
Cause he has pretty hair
And a round pretty face”

I looked at Miss Grace
From his head to his toes
I bit both my lips and
I turned up my nose

When you look real close
Miss grace ain’t so pretty
In fact he’s a raggedy
Wrecked up old biddy

Miss Grace had some charm
I guess he had flair
That nasty thick Jerry Curl
Nightmare for hair

Grace smiled and I jumped
I wanted to shout
He had two teeth
One on each side of his mouth

I thought to myself
What folks in this city
Would open their mouth
And call Miss Grace pretty

I wanted to laugh
I thought I would die
I wanted to scream
But I held it inside

I smiled and I said
Trying hard to save face
“Percy were did you meet
This charming Miss Grace?”

As I clenched my teeth
Tears rolled down my cheek
Thought my side would burst
Holding laughs in so deep

Percy said with a puzzled
Look on his face
“I don’t mind telling you
How I met Miss grace

I was not out ho’n
It was really quite sweet
I met him in church
He was in the next seat”

Percy works in the Library
Sings in the church choir
His one major flaw
Is that Percy’s a liar

He told all his friends
That he was discreet
“Man you won’t find me
Meeting boys on the street

You won't find me
Cruising boys at the bars
Or having young men
In the back seats of cars

I sing in the church
I've done it for years
And you won't find me
Out their hustling queers

I'm a church going man
But I know what I like
I just don't see myself
Hanging out there at night"

Miss Pucci walk in
He's known Percy for years
Both stunned and surprised
Not believing his ears

Miss Pucci said, "Percy
I've known you forever
You story sounds cute
As you try to be clever

But, butch thing don't try it
Cause you know and I know
The truth and the shame of
Why you sing soprano

Old Percy sat down
Threw booth hands in the air
He had no idea that
Miss Pucci was there

Percy's face was sad
A look of scared pity
Cause Pucci had dirt on him
Back to the sixties

Before Percy could utter
A word from his mouth
Miss Pucci sat back
With a laugh and a shout

"Go on now Percy
Tell them the truth
Joys and the follies
Of your hateful youth"

Miss Grace rolled his eyes
Like “I wish that bitch would”
I pulled up a seat
This was going to be good

Old Percy he sat there
And just closed his eyes
He knew he was in
For one hell of ride

Miss Pucci sat back
And started to grin
Thinking not what to say
But were to begin

Pucci Said, “Grace
You think he’s a prize
I’ve got one low story
To open your eyes

It’s true that Percy
Has a music degree
He got from jail
In Washington, D.C.

You know that keen voice
That sings all so high
Jail trade made him sing
And dance to survive

The way he hits those
Pretty high alto notes
Came from all those big
Jail trade dicks down his throat

He sang and danced
Got his degree too
There’s more to his story
Than he’ll tell to you

He got out of jail and
He thought he’d be rich
He tries to forget
He an old cell blocks bitch

All those men got some
They fucked on both ends
They passed thing around
Again and again

When Percy got out
His mind was all hazy
‘Cause big dick jail trade
Had fucked him half crazy

They said it was lies
But I knew it was true
Steve, that old Drag Queen
Said she fucked him too"

Pucci said that and we
All laughed out loud
By this time he gathered
A listening crowd

Pucci sat back
Took a sip of his drink
Looked at Miss Grace,
Grinned and gave him a wink

Percy just sat there
Both stunned and disgusted
He could not believe
Pucci dared to discuss it

Miss Grace got pissed
His voice started blaring
He was looking quite foolish
But he was not caring

Grace screamed, "You just lying!
You drunk crazy witch
You nasty old Drag Queen
You trifling bitch!"

By now the crowed
Was all standing 'round
They knew something ugly
Was 'bout to go down

The dancing had stopped
They turned off the music
They looked at Miss Pucci
And knew he would loose it

Miss Pucci paused
For a moment or so
Then all at once said
"You raggedy ho

I know you ain't call me
Trifling sister girl
In your tight Sergio Jeans
And that fake Jerry curl

Percy where'd you get
This old welfare bitch
Her dollar store ear rings
And weave poorly stitched

Don't open your mouth
'Till I'm talking to you
You toothless, tiered,
Jezebel jeggabo

You think you got Percy
And you think it's sweet
If he really loved you
He'd by you some teeth"

By then the whole house
Was laughing out loud
Don't come for Miss Pucci
When he's in a crowd

Percy laughed ‘till he cried
When Pucci read Grace
Who got so pissed off
That he left in disgrace

I said, “Now Pucci
That was kinda shabby
Why did you go off
On Percy’s new lady”

He said, “Fuck that ho
With those blood shot eyes
If Miss Grace didn’t know
He should now recognize

We love to cut up
Read each other so low
If Miss Grace can’t hang
Then she needed to go

Me and Percy go back
Forty years plus eight
Percy wasn’t mad so
Hell why was Grace”

Percy, still laughing
He searched for his hat
He took Miss Grace home
In his big Cadillac

Pucci got up and stretched
And continued his drinking
He smiled big and said
“What the hell’s Percy thinking?

What is it about Grace
That makes him so happy?
Miss thing has no teeth
Hair all stringy and nappy

There's no money no looks
Those gray, bloody gums
Does he have to go there
Just to get him some?"

I said, "You know Pucci
Sometimes love is blind
It's more than just looks
It's the heart soul and mind"

Pucci looked at me crazy
And said, "Yeah that true.
Where did Percy find his love
Out at the zoo?"

Pucci finished his drink
Said the party was nice
Grabbed his bag and his hat
Gave me some good advice

"Live a clean privet life
What ever you do
So old queens like me
Won't come and read you

I lived a long life
Yes I'm Sixty plus
My friends and old pieces
Are all dust to dust

It’s hard when you’re old
And a fem queen like me
If you’re blessed to live long
You’ll eventually see

Treat people good
Child, take it from me
‘Cause you never know
Just who you might need

The ones that you read
When you camp and clown
One day may be all
That you have around”

Pucci hugged my neck
And then he left
I said goodbye to
My other guests

Finished cleaning my house
Then I took a rest
Seems the gathering was
A big success